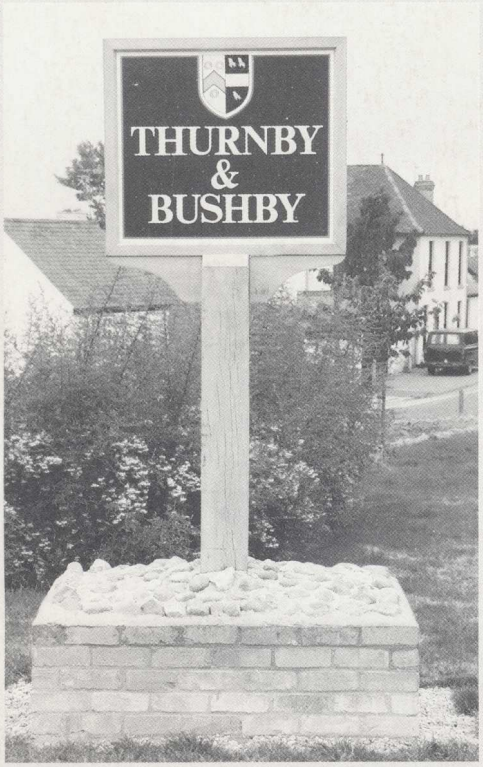

THURNBY AND BUSHBY: AN APPRAISAL

ERRATUM

Due to an unfortunate oversight, the following was omitted from the printed copy:

THURNBY, BUSHBY & STOUGHTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Mrs. Claude Bennion inaugurated Thurnby, Bushby & Stoughton Women's Institute on 21st May, 1935, 20 ladies being present.

Throughout the years many projects have been undertaken, the Choir having twice taken part in oratorios at the Albert Hall, London.

Other achievements have been: the production of a Guide to Thurnby, collection of local May Day Songs (a record of these being in the Leicester Museum), the story of the Bells and the local Hunt, a survey of the Field Names in the area and a recording of all the names in the Churchyard.

The Drama Group is at present rehearsing for a County W.I. competitive play, their names still being on the previous trophy.

The publication 'Leics. & Rutland Village Record Book' (published by 'Countryside Books') contains an article from this W.I., and includes a photograph of Thurnby Court.

Meetings, with speakers, are held on the 2nd Monday of every month, and outings to theatres and stately homes are arranged.

INTRODUCTION.

Why an Appraisal?

Pressures for development during recent years, especially in housing, have greatly changed the character of Thurnby and expanded its population: as a result it has become increasingly difficult to be sure of the views of residents on how best to plan the future development of the Parish. Also, we have been conscious that there was no recent, broadly-based and easily available description of Thurnby and Bushby containing information about life in earlier times.

At the invitation of the Parish Council, representatives from all the village organisations came to a meeting and agreed unanimously that it was time Thurnby Parish undertook an Appraisal. Subsequently an Appraisal Committee was formed which grew as the Appraisal developed.

Encouraged by the Leicestershire Rural Community Council and the knowledge that other villages had completed Appraisals, the Committee set about its self-imposed task! They were rewarded with a wealth of information and comments thanks to the splendid responses to the questionnaire, oral history project and many individual contributions.

We hope you will find this book useful, and interesting reading. The 'historical' information concentrates mainly on the last century and a half so as to tie in with the memories of our older residents - this was not the time to attempt a comprehensive Parish history, but readers may like to follow up references in the text and the reading list.

We shall be only too pleased to hear of any respects in which, despite our best efforts, we have 'got it wrong' - or to receive additional information: it may be possible to use the newsletter of TABS for any suitable material received.

We hope this book will help you to appreciate and enjoy the Parish in which you live, to be increasingly aware of the implications of new planning and development proposals, and encourage you to take a fuller and more active part in all aspects of village life.

Judith Lord.
Co-ordinator. 1989.

Acknowledgements:

Many people have volunteered widely different skills. Firstly, I would like to thank the main contributors:

John Martin	Geology	) Leicestershire)
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Ted Illsley	Secretary
Mike Bailey	Treasurer
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Leicester Mercury

The County Records Office

Everards Brewery

I would also like to acknowledge the support given b

The Parish Council

Leicestershire Rural Community Council

Leicestershire Museums Service

I would also like to thank the many willing helpers who distributed and often painstakingly collected nearly 600 questionnaires, and also a number of anonymous financial donors.

However, most of all, I would like to thank most sincerely the Appraisal Committee for the tremendous support given to me. Without the co-operation and teamwork necessary for an enterprise like this, the Appraisal could never have been produced.

GEOLOGY OF THURNBY PARISH

Just as in every other parish, Thurnby's true foundations are its geology. The rocks beneath our feet - under the fields, in our gardens and on which our houses stand - have the most profound, if largely unnoticed, effect on the natural history, land use and settlement patterns of Thurnby. The landscape we now see has taken hundreds of thousands of years to form; only within the last 50 years or so has it been possible, thanks to new technologies and agricultural practices, to begin to overcome the constraints imposed by the geology. And even now, we would ignore geology to our social and economic cost.

The oldest rocks in Thurnby are about 212 million years old.

Most readers might think that there are no rocks in Thurnby, because everything seems to be sticky clay. In fact it is a convention among geologists to include clay, sand and gravel, along with the limestone, granite and so on which would be expected, as kinds of rocks, even though they are unconsolidated materials.

Thurnby's oldest rocks are clays, shales (flattened clay) and thin limestones. They were formed in the Jurassic period at a time when the area we now call Leicestershire lay under a warm, subtropical sea. The sediment which washed into the sea from surrounding lands settled on the bottom, accumulating there in thick layers, or beds. The weight of new beds compressed the older ones, squeezing out most of the contained water and converting the mud into clay, shale and, when the mud was rich in lime, limestone. These Jurassic sediments are up to 175 metres thick in the parish - in other words, the highest points in Thurnby, about 140 m above sea level, stand on 175 metres of clay, while the valley bottoms, at 80 m above the sea, still have some 115 meters of clay beneath them. Beneath the Jurassic rocks there are other, still older rocks, but they outcrop nowhere in our area.

After the clays, shales and limestones were deposited, many thousands more metres of sediments of different kinds and increasingly younger ages were piled on top. Then, perhaps 60 million years ago, the area was raised above sea level and a long process of erosion began. All the overlying rocks were removed again (the sediment so created being carried by rivers to contemporary seas) and the landscape we see today was gradually carved.

The present valleys date from relatively very recent times - perhaps less than 350 thousand years ago. Some time about then, during the so-called Ice Ages, streams were established in roughly their present positions. The valleys cut then have been enlarged since, mostly by glaciers, but also by glacial meltwater and, within the last ten thousand years, just a little more by the modern streams. Some new deposition of sediments also took place during the Ice Ages. The glaciers and ice sheets, which advanced southwards or moved down from high places during the periods of intense cold, "bulldozed" sediment scraped up from areas which they crossed and then dumped it, especially at the position of maximum ice extent, when the ice melted. This mixture of crushed rock, clay and pebbles is called boulder clay; it once covered the whole parish, but has been removed from the valley sides and bottoms by erosion, so now appears to blanket only the higher ground. At other times in the Ice Ages meltwater streams dumped spreads of sand and gravel; these occur as extensive patches within, beneath and particularly on top of the boulder clay and therefore now outcrop on the hilltops and, to a lesser extent, half way down the valley sides. Some of the valley side gravel deposits may, however,

be isolated, slumped masses of material from higher up.

The map (**fig 1**) shows the outcrop pattern of all the rock units described above. The pattern results from the interaction of the thick, effectively horizontal rock layers with the modern contours. You would produce a similar effect if you scooped down into an angel cake.

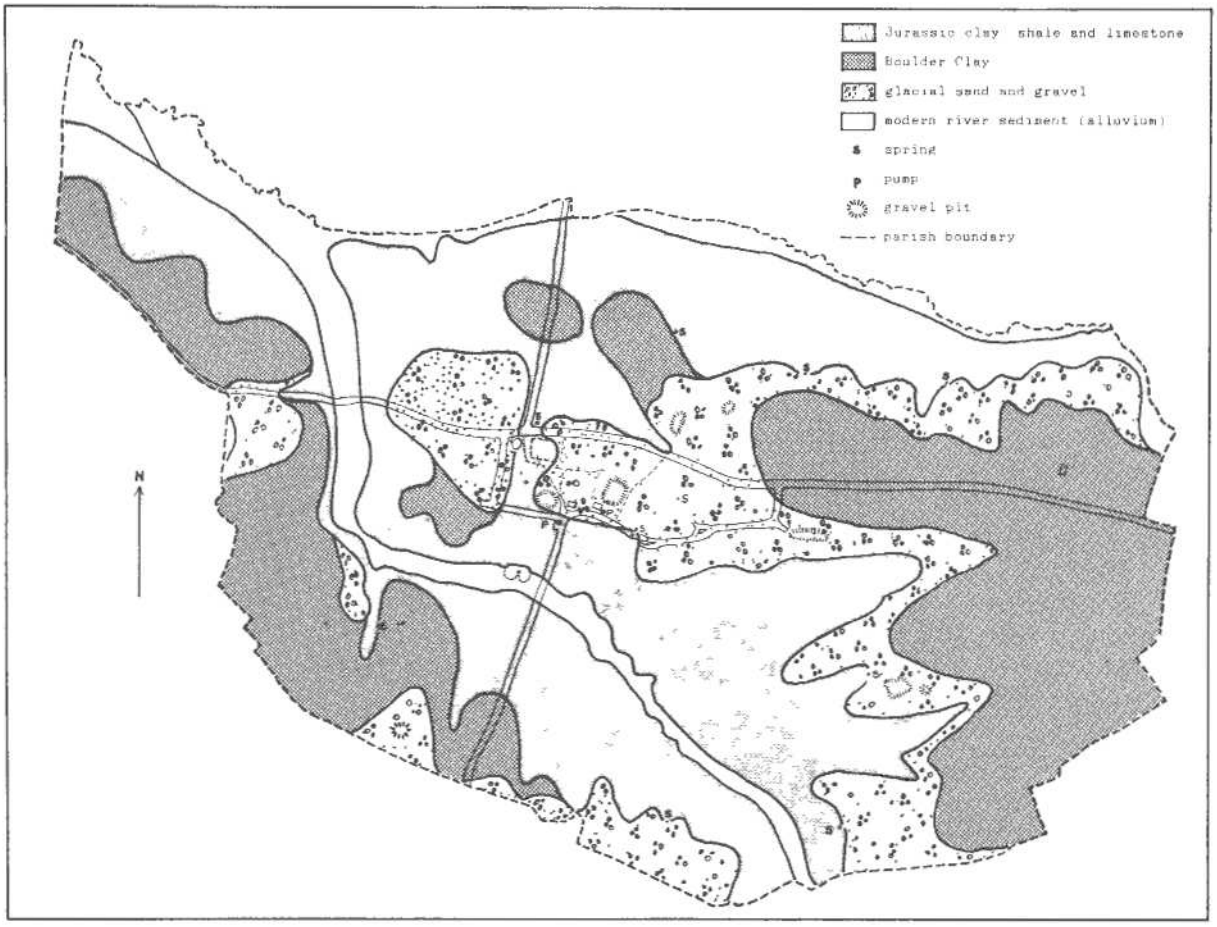
Geology and the landscape

As mentioned above, the different kinds of rock influence the way the land is, or has been, used by the inhabitants of Thurnby. For a first example, consider where the old part of the village itself is situated. The Danish founders, migrating through the wooded east Leicestershire hill country searching for a suitable village site, knew what they needed: a site with lightish soils, access to fresh water and with south-facing slopes. They found all these on the crest and southern edge of a gravel ridge. The gravel and sand gave lighter soils than the surrounding clays, and where the clay emerged from beneath the gravel a spring-line provided water. Later, as more forest was cleared, the villagers extended their territory onto the heavier clay soils, where ox-drawn ploughs worked the rich land and created the ridges which survived, under grass, until recently.

Also surviving, but from the more recent past, are the hollows in a number of places - the southeast corner of the Manor field, the whole school field and the area beyond the east end of Bushby - where gravel was dug for road making.

Modern inhabitants of Thurnby may still notice the different effects of clay or gravel beneath their gardens. If you live on boulder clay or Jurassic clay, perhaps on

Map Fig 1



Forest Rise or Charnwood Drive, your digging will be much harder than if you live on the gravel nearer the village centre (but your cabbages may be better). And despite modern farming techniques and although it may be possible to grow barley or grass almost anywhere in the parish, natural drainage, fertility, the ability to get on the land in wet weather, planting time and harvest are still influenced by the rocks beneath the fields.

The contrast between clay and gravel is especially marked in dry seasons. When clay is wet (its usual condition in Britain) it swells. In the summer of 1976 Thurnby's boulder clay shrank and cracked, and it was properties on that rock, rather than those in the old village centre, whose foundations moved. In more typical years, clay dwellers count the few days when it is really safe to venture onto the vegetable garden; in such years the springs trickle, as they have done since the first Thurnby people moved in, at places which are now, for example, by the stile into the pub field, also where the children cross the service road by the A47 - Station Lane lights, and right in the corner of the new playing field. The map shows some of the main springs outside the built area, but now you will be able to identify for yourself all the likely places, wherever gravel lies uphill from the clay.

Fossils, boulders and rockeries

The sea which, 200 million years ago, deposited the clays of the Jurassic period was home for many marine animals. The remains of some of them have been preserved as fossils; occasionally these are found in the areas where Jurassic clays outcrop today. Commonest are the fossils of oysters of a primitive kind called Gryphaea. Their narrow hoof-like shape is the reason for their old country name of "devil's toenails". Rarer are fossils of the tightly spiralled shells of marine animals related to modern squids. These ammonites are sometimes exposed in the beds of the Thurnby Brook where it cuts across the Jurassic strata in the Thurnby Lodge estate.

The ice age boulder clay deposits contain fossils, but they are "second hand" in that they were ploughed up by the ice sheets along with the old rocks in which they were buried. Because the boulder clay consists largely of re-worked Jurassic rocks from north Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, the fossils in the boulder clay are similar to those in the true Jurassic rocks of the parish. So you may find Gryphaea almost anywhere, together with bullet-shaped fossils, the hard internal shells of cuttlefish-like sea animals called belemnites. The boulder clay also contains boulders, of course, and these demonstrate very neatly the northerly origin of the ice sheets; they include flints from Yorkshire and water-worn jasper pebbles, originally from Scandinavia but dredged up by the ice from the floor of the North Sea.

No description of the geology of Thurnby would be complete without a mention of the true "exotics", the rocks which should not be here at all. These are commonly of two kinds, both connected with gardens. Lumps of pinkish-white gypsum are frequently scattered in borders, sometimes ornamentally but mainly, I suspect, with the idea of breaking down the heavy clay soil chemically. Even more widespread are blocks of shin-barking, dark green and pink "granite" used for rockery stone. This rock comes mainly from the quarries at Mountsorrel and is more accurately called granodiorite. Because it is so hard and angular its effect in a rockery is not always succesful; much nicer are the few rock gardens made with slabs of bedded Lincolnshire limestone (for lime-loving plants) or sandstone from

Yorkshire (for heathers and other acid-soil subjects).

Building stone

The final geological influence on the appearance of Thurnby is that of building materials. No good natural building stone occurs in the area. The earliest houses must have been constructed of timber, wattle and daub (using clay from the site); later, timber framing would have been built onto a low wall of flints and other boulders dug from the boulder clay. Some of Thurnby's oldest surviving properties have this construction, while others, although rebuilt in brick in the 18th century, still have their original boulder footings. The bricks used then, and many of those made subsequently, have almost all come from brickworks in the eastern suburbs of Leicester, as far as can be judged, where, at Gipsy Lane and other pits, red clay of Triassic age (about 225 million years old) has been dug and fired. Some local Jurassic clays have been used in neighbouring parishes for bricks, for example at Lowesby, but there is no surviving evidence of brick making in Thurnby. A few houses of the early 20th century, together with many of the 1970s developments, have used bricks imported from the brickpits at Peterborough and Bedford.

Many of the chapters of the Thurnby Appraisal which follow describe patterns in the history and natural history of the parish. This summary of the geological foundations of the area should have made those patterns easier to understand.

JGM 01.1989./26.09.89

THURNBY & BUSHBY - THE NAMES

Why 'Thurnby' and 'Bushby'?

The names have a common element 'by' that has Old Norse origins and indicates an inhabited place, more particularly a village or homestead: the remaining parts of both names derive from personal names - Thurnby from Thyrne and Bushby from Butr.

The earliest recorded spelling of Thurnby was Turnebi and dates from the Domesday Book of 1086: the earliest for Bushby was Buszebia and dates from 1175.

Jill Bourne: Place Names of Leicestershire and Rutland

Cottages in Main Street

Top: View of Thurnby from the South
Below: Sketch of the Square. L. Stuart.

THE GEOGRAPHY & NATURAL HISTORY OF THURNBY & BUSHBY.

The present-day parish of Thurnby consists of the whole of the former parish of Bushby together with about half the former parish of Thurnby, the rest of Thurnby having been incorporated into Leicester at various times since 1935. In area the parish is 1029 acres (417 hectares), which makes it one of the smaller parishes in the county.

In the study of the natural history of any area as large as a parish it is difficult to avoid being overwhelmed by the detail, so that you literally cannot see the wood for the trees. One way of avoiding this trap is to get hold of some copies of a large scale map of the area.

Firstly, locate the parish boundary. This reveals that the parish of Thurnby is more or less rectangular in shape, measuring about 1.5 miles (2.5 km) from east to west and 1.25 miles (2 km) from north to south.

Next, locate on the same map the contour lines, which may be at 25 ft or 100 ft intervals, and then all the watercourses shown. The combination of these two pieces of information gives you some idea of the topography of the parish and of the drainage patterns. These were matters of vital concern to our ancestors, whether they were setting out their houses, locating springs and wells as a supply of water for man and beast, or laying out their fields to take best advantage of slope and drainage.

From this exercise you will see that Thurnby is situated on a ridge running east-west and sloping down in the west to the valley of the Bushby Brook where it passes under the A47. The A47 runs along the northern side of this ridge and the older part of the village lies on its southern side. The parish is bounded on its northern side by the course of the Thurnby Brook, where it adjoins the parish of Scraptoft, and this is almost certainly one of its ancient boundaries. In the south-western part of the parish the land rises from the valley of the Bushby Brook to another ridge marked by the course of the green lane known as Hyssop's Lane, where Thurnby abuts Stoughton. This again may be an ancient boundary.

View south towards Stoughton

In the south-eastern part of the parish and along its eastern edge, the parish boundary zigzags along field edges through gently rolling country from Sunny Leys to Winkadale, abutting here the neighbouring parishes of Houghton-on-the-Hill and Hungarton.

Whilst we are looking at the watercourses, it is worth noting their length, since they are the source of much of the wildlife interest of the parish. There is about 1.25 miles (2 km) of the Thurnby Brook, shared with Scraptoft, and 1.5 miles (2.7 km) of the Bushby Brook and its tributaries, part shared with Leicester.

These then are the natural features of the parish which have some bearing on its wildlife, together with the rocks which underlie it and the soils which have developed from them. The dominant influence on Thurnby's wildlife is, however,

that of the hand of man, over the perhaps 5000 years or so since some of its land was first cleared for agriculture.

To see something of the effects of human activity, go back to the map. All of the features shown, other than the contours and watercourses, are man-made. The oldest feature is part of the parish boundaries. The second oldest is the oldest building in the village, the church, parts of which date back to the 13th century. The third oldest feature is probably the road we call the A47, which existed as a main highway long before it was turnpiked in 1770.

The landscape of most of the parish owes its character, however, to a rectangular pattern of small fields, averaging between five and ten acres in extent. This field pattern dates back in most places to the enclosure of the common fields in 1770. In the built up areas, the size and layout of the blocks of housing, particularly those erected in this century, has been determined by the location and shape of the fields sold for development. Good examples of this relationship are to be seen in the development on the north side of the A47.

Most of the other significant landscape features of the parish from a wildlife point of view date from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. They include: farmhouses and field barns; the railway, which was constructed in the 1880s; Bushby Spinney, planted in the 1880s; and the lake which once formed part of the gardens of the monumental Thurnby Court, built in 1872 and demolished in 1916.

One unusual feature of the agricultural landscape of Thurnby, compared with other parishes, is the lack of field ponds. Maps of 100 years ago show several, almost none of which now survive in any state to support wildlife. The explanation lies in the wealth of springs, particularly to the south of the village, which could be piped to water troughs, making the digging of ponds unnecessary. Alas, many of these springs are now piped away into ditches. Thurnby is also singularly lacking in woodland, having only Bushby Spinney and an even smaller unnamed wood in its south-west. This reflects the early clearance of the land for agriculture and perhaps also the nearness to Leicester and to sources of fuel other than wood in and since medieval times.

Enough of generalities, what of the wildlife itself? In this respect I am constrained by the fact that only for a century or so have naturalists both had the leisure and the knowledge and seen the need to set down for posterity any account of their wildlife observations in the parish. Most of the detailed records available to me relate in fact only to the last thirty years. I will attempt to summarise what we do know habitat by habitat.

Hedges.

The most permanent feature of the farmland is its hedges, although there has been extensive removal of these in the southern part of the parish in response to what were seen to be the needs of modern arable farming, with the result that the parish has lost about a quarter of its hedges in the last fifty years.

The richest hedge by far is that which runs along the course of the Thurnby Brook and which is technically about half in Thurnby and half in Scraptoft. This has in it almost every kind of tree and shrub that one might reasonably expect to find in this part of Leicestershire. The trees include well grown oak and ash, the sucker shoots from elms lost to Dutch Elm Disease and both crack and white willow. The shrubs include field maple, hazel, midland and common hawthorns, holly, crab apple,

blackthorn, common and goat sallows, elder, dogwood and guelder rose. Apart from the presence of woodland shrubs such as hazel, the antiquity of this hedge is borne out by the occurrence of plants such as dogs mercury and greater stitchwort, which probably date back to the time before the Norman Conquest when the whole area was woodland.

Elsewhere in the parish the hedges are generally much less diverse, consisting for the most part of the common hawthorn with which they were planted at the time of Enclosure, with later accretions of berry-bearing species such as blackthorn and elder. In places, field maple and crab apple may indicate a rather older origin.

Other significant hedges in the parish from a wildlife point of view are those along watercourses like the Bushby Brook and its tributaries. The most useful are not only those that are diverse in composition, providing a greater variety of food, but also those that have been allowed to grow to a fair height and thickness. This is of particular importance to birds, not many of which can use hedges that are annually shorn off at about a yard high. In passing, the thickets of bramble which are a feature of one or more hedges immediately to the south of the village are a good source of nectar for butterflies.

The old isolated ash trees in many of the hedges are an important feature. They provide canopy nest sites for carrion crows and kestrels and hole nest sites for little owls and starlings. The rugged bark of the boles and roots, where not smothered by ivy, is colonised by a colourful variety of lichens. One of these, *Parmelia caperata*, discovered this year, was previously thought to be extinct in the county.

Fields.

The fields bounded by the hedges vary in their wildlife interest according to how long it is since they were last disturbed by cultivation and the extent to which they have been plied with fertiliser, herbicides and insecticides. The main arable crops, barley and wheat, suit only a small number of birds, notably skylarks and those small mammals such as field mice which move out from the hedges in the summer. Rape is little better, though it does attract huge numbers of pollen beetles, which may have their place in the scheme of things. Grassland which has been improved by ploughing and reseeding with ryegrass and clover is not much richer in its wildlife than arable, though the clover must be a significant nectar source for bees. It is the small acreage of permanent grassland, even if it is improved to some extent which makes up for the deficiencies of the rest.

There is, for instance, part of a field off the Covert Lane footpath from Winkadale where earthnut and 'Good Friday Grass' (field woodrush) still grow in abundance. At the edge of the field may be found the relics of an even richer flora, bugle, cowslip and lady's-smock. Again, fragments of unimproved grassland in small fields along the upper reaches of the Bushby Brook still retain betony, hardheads, lady's bedstraw, great and salad burnets. In one place there is a small spring-fed marsh with marsh horsetail and meadowsweet. These are the last remnants of what most of the Thurnby grassland would have been like 50 or more years ago. How long I wonder will they retain their interest?

Not quite so rich, but nevertheless valuable in the context of the parish are the few remaining buttercup fields on the south side of the village, where the flowers

seen feeding with orange tips on the keck in May and later in the year small numbers of burnet moths hatched out from their papery cocoons on grass stems. Parts of the line remaining are mostly heavily scrubbed over, but they still afford a useful habitat for nesting birds, and in places remnants of the former grassland flora such as common twayblade orchid may still survive. There are certainly still large quantities of sweet violet under the scrub. Properly managed, parts of the line could be fine nature reserve for the parish, much as the stretch further to the east was for some years.

Built-up areas.

The major wildlife habitat in the parish remaining for us to consider is the village itself, with all the outlying areas of housing, which now occupy about a quarter of its total area. This is likely to be the richest habitat in terms of the sheer variety of species present, especially of animals. We know this from the studies of Dr Jenny Owen in her garden not far away at 66 Scraptoft Lane, where she has recorded in over a decade of intensive study some 2500 different kinds of animals. They are mostly, of course, insects and other such small animal life, and the list just of animal groups is quite bewildering, including flatworms, earthworms, snails, slugs, woodlice, centipedes, millipedes, spiders, false scorpions, harvestmen, mites, earwigs, dragonflies, plant bugs, leaf hoppers, aphids, beetles, moths, butterflies, hover flies, bees, wasps, ants, amphibians, birds and mammals.

We do not have anything remotely resembling such a comprehensive record of the animal or plant life of the built-up area of Thurnby, since her record is in fact unique almost world wide, and in fact it only covers the wildlife of one garden. This is one of the reasons why I asked householders for their observations in the questionnaire I circulated earlier in the year. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that such a survey has been attempted in this country, and the response was quite overwhelming. I have summarised the results in an appendix, as your contribution to our knowledge of the wildlife of the parish.

Conclusion

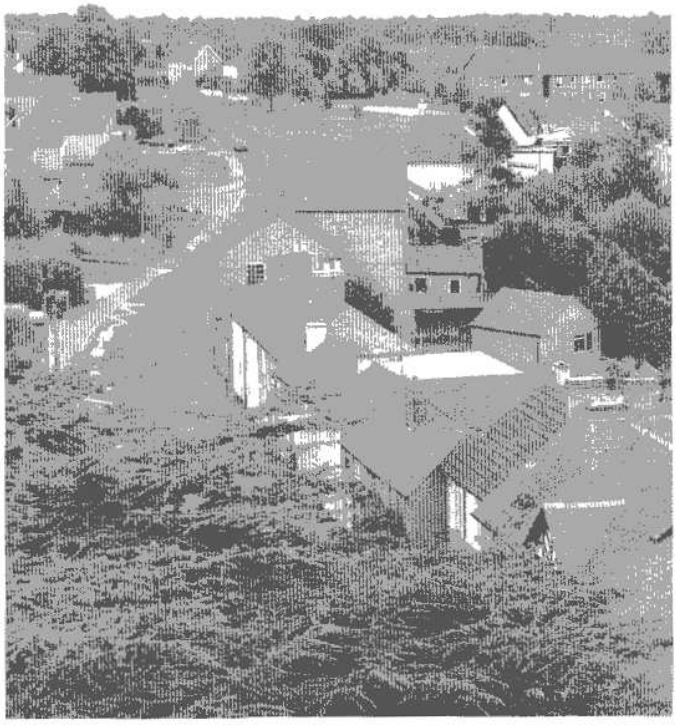
To sum up, Thurnby might seem a very ordinary piece of Leicestershire suburban, village and farming landscape, with nothing special to its wildlife. What we find, by taking a closer look, is that the patterns of the distribution of its wildlife habitats and species are unique, related as they are to the unique features of its landscape and their exploitation by man.

There are features such as the parish boundary hedges which in places may hark back to the time when what we call Thurnby was part of the continuous woodland known as the Wildwood. There are species which owe their presence to the medieval use of herbs and fondness for home-brewed beer. There are others which are found in Thurnby because of the 19th century railway builders and some such as the collared dove which have arrived under their own steam in the last thirty years.

Over the last fifty years there has been in Thurnby, as in the rest of lowland England, a general trend towards the destruction of habitat on agricultural land and a resulting impoverishment of its wildlife. This has been compensated to some extent by the developing richness of the wildlife of the built up areas, as they mature. Parts of the parish are in urgent need of effort to conserve their wildlife interest, since it will not survive unaided. However, for anyone with the health and strength to get out along its

footpaths, or even just the patience to get to know well the plant and animal life of their own back garden, there is still an enormous amount remaining to be discovered. I.M.Evans 13.8.89

by Callum Stuart
age 6



Main Street, Thurnby. View from Church Tower

THURNBY PARISH - PRESENT AND PAST.

Probably the single best source of information on the history of Thurnby is the Victoria County History of Leicester: pages 321-326 of Volume 5 on the Gartree Hundred deal specifically with Thurnby and point out that whereas the Ancient Parish of Thurnby included the hamlet of Bushby and the chapelry of Stoughton, the Civil Parishes of Bushby and Thurnby were combined in 1935 while Stoughton remained separate.

'Civil Parishes' date from 1871 and Rural Districts from 1881 until their elimination as part of the major reorganisation of local government in 1974. Billesdon Rural District, of which we now have generally fond and nostalgic memories and whose offices were in Thurnby Grange from 1939 to 1974, had a population of 10,073 in 1881 of which 232 were in Thurnby Civil Parish, 56 in Bushby and 144 in Stoughton. Boundaries remained unchanged until 1935 when a part of Thurnby, containing roughly a quarter of its population, was transferred to the County Borough of Leicester and simultaneously the whole of Bushby was transferred to Thurnby. In 1966 there was another, and the most recent, boundary change when about 50 acres containing Wintersdale Road and part of the Thurnby Lodge Estate were transferred from Thurnby to Leicester.

The successive changes of boundary and the make-up of Ancient and Civil Parishes mean that - especially in the case of Thurnby - printed records at different periods refer to differing geographical areas. They also mean that population figures can only be interpreted against the background of the changes that have taken place: the following are taken selectively from the Census Reports (normally 10-yearly, but for obvious reasons 1941 was missed).

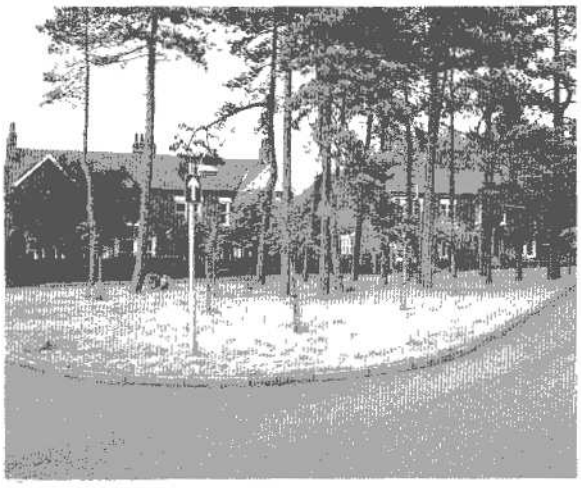
	Thurnby	Bushby	Stoughton
1801-1871	Between 320 and 400 (Ancient Parish)	Between 51 and 96 (hamlet)	Between 119 and 167 (chapelry)
1881	232 (Civil Parish)	96 (Civil Parish)	144 (Civil Parish)
1911	226	116	176
1931	448	536	122
1951	843		358
1961	2772	-	234 (minor boundary
1971	2418	-	268 changes)
1981	2380		245

An interesting feature of the figures both in the nineteenth century and more recently is the distinct excess of females over males - for example, 107 males and 140 females in 1841, 1148 males and 1232 females in 1981 when 19% of the population was under sixteen and 17% pensioners.

Bushby's separate identity now is as an Electoral Ward in the Parish of Thurnby, the Harborough District Council and Parliamentary Constituency, and of course the County of Leicester.

At the time of the Village Appraisal in 1989, the responsibilities of the three tiers

Bushby Spinney



of local authority in Thurnby and Bushby were as follows:

Two authorities are responsible for local government services, other than those provided by the Parish Council, in Thurnby and Bushby. These are Harborough District Council and Leicestershire County Council. For electoral purposes the parishes of Thurnby and Bushby are grouped with Stoughton in one ward for District Council elections, whilst for County Council elections, the two parishes form part of a much bigger ward known as the Billesdon Division. The main functions of the two Councils are:

Harborough District Council

The District Council has responsibility for planning and building control, environmental health, housing, amenity services including recreation, street cleansing and refuse collection, rate collection (which will become community charge collection from April 1990 to meet the expenses incurred by itself and the County and parish councils) electoral registration, and the issuing of licences and permits for numerous establishments and activities. In addition, the Council administers grants and benefits for several government departments including home improvement grants and housing benefit. It also undertakes sewerage functions on an agency basis for the Water Authority. The Council offices are based in Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough.

Leicestershire County Council.

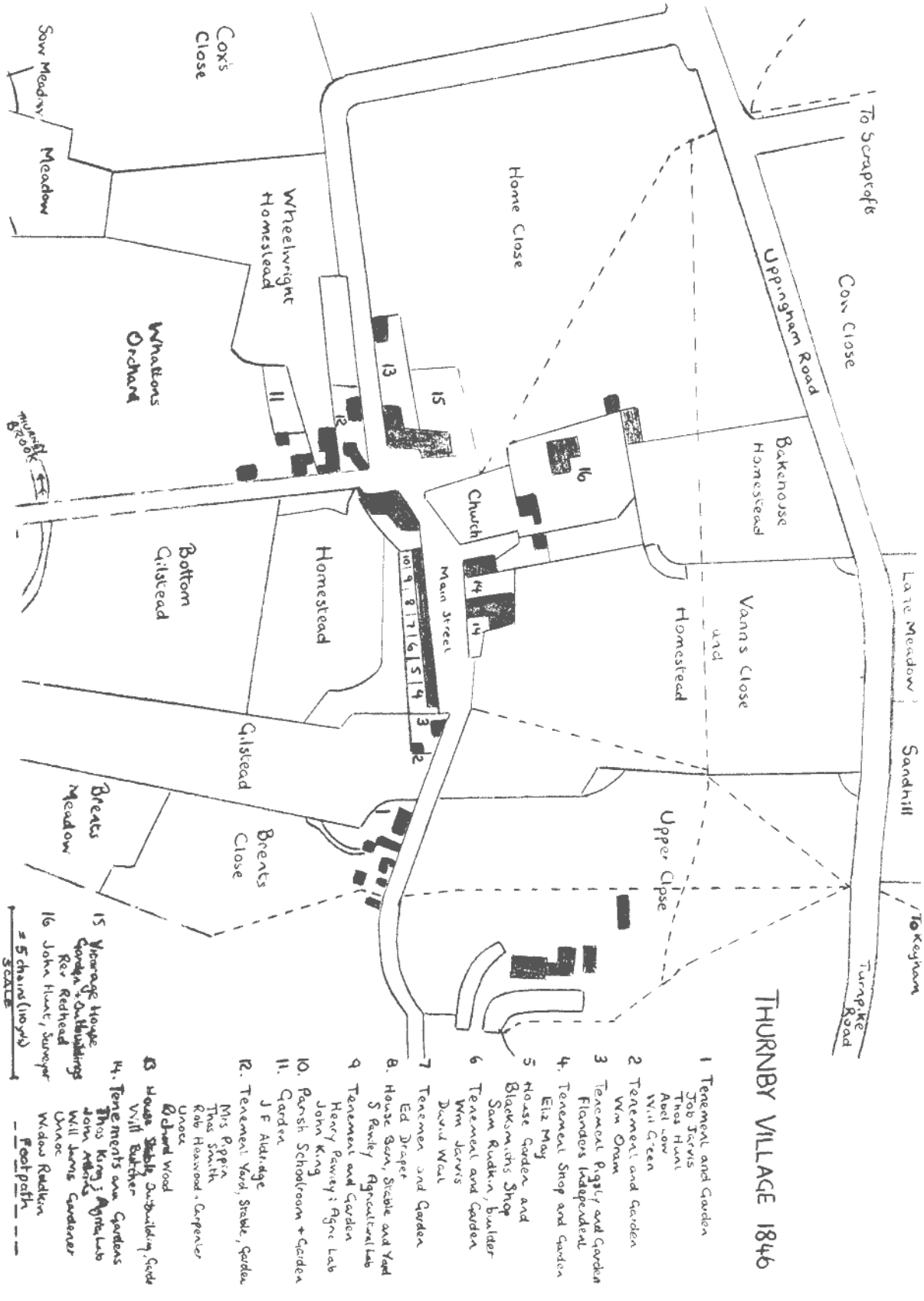
The County Council is responsible for education, social services, highways and transportation, strategic planning, trading standards, libraries and museums, police, fire, waste disposal and economic development. County Hall is on the A50 at Glenfield. There is also a divisional office in Northampton Road, Market Harborough, dealing with highway maintenance and social services in the Harborough District area.

The Parish Council

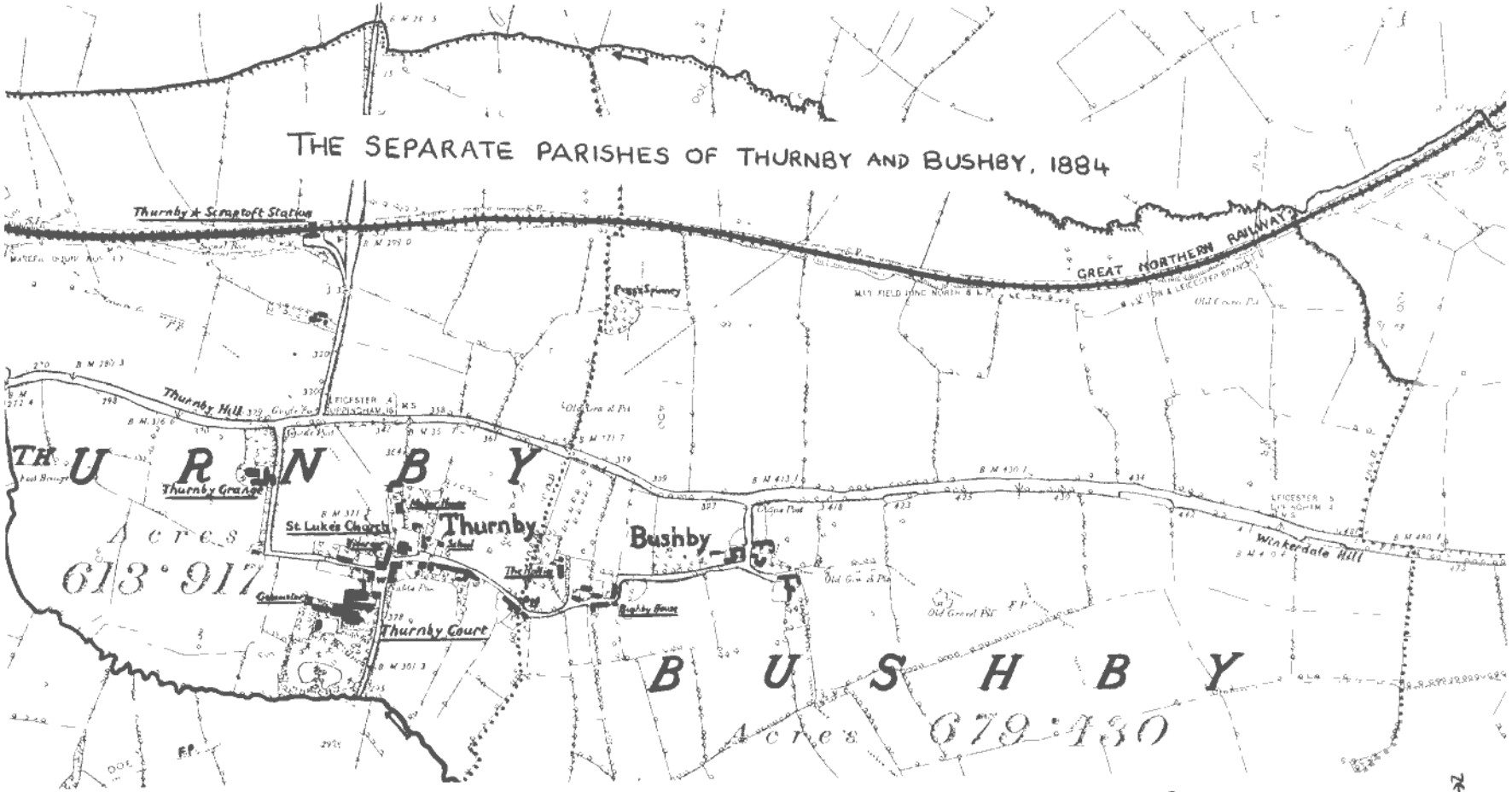
The Parish Council consists of 10 members, 7 for the Thurnby Ward and 3 for the Bushby Ward. It has limited powers but is able to exercise influence in planning matters and matters relating to the state of roads and footpaths (including those across fields). The Parish Council is particularly active in matters relating to Road Safety and the environment. It is open to any Parishioner whose name appears in the Electoral Roll to attend Meetings and, if invited by the Chairman, to participate in the discussion of any matter. At least once a year, usually in April or May, the Annual Parish Meeting is held at which all Parishioners have the right of attendance and speaking. If you have any matter which you feel the Parish Council ought to consider either contact your local Parish Councillor or the Parish Clerk.

Main Street, Thurnby. Sketch by Neil Sivell

Map Fig 2


THURNBY VILLAGE 1846
1 Tenement and Garden
Job Jarvis
Thos Hunt
Abel Low
Will Green
2 Tenement and Garden
Wm Oram
3 Tenement Pigsty and Garden
Flanders Independent
4. Tenement Shop and Garden
Eliz May
5 House Garden and
Blacksmiths Shop
Sam Rudkin, builder
6 Tenement and Garden
Wm Jarvis
David Wait
7 Tenement and Garden
Ed Draper
8. House Barn, Stable and Yard
S Pawley Agricultural Lab
9 Tenement and Garden
Henry Pawley; Agric Lab
John King
10. Parish Schoolroom + Garden
11. Garden
J F Aldridge
12. Tenement Yard, Stable, Garden
Mrs Pippin
Thos Smith
Rob Heawood - Carpenter
Unoca
Richard Wood
13 House Stable Outbuilding, Garde
Will Butcher
14. Tenements and Gardens
Thos King; Agricultural Lab
John Adams
Will Jarvis Gardener
Unoca
Widow Rudkin
15 Vicarage House
Garden + Outbuildings
Rev Redhead
16 John Hunt, Surveyor
= 5 chains (110 yds)
SCALE
Footpath
To Scraptoft
Cow Close
Uppingham Road
Home Close
Wheelwright Homestead
Cox's Close
Sow Meadow
Meadow
Whattons Orchard
Bakehouse Homestead
Church
Main Street
Homestead
Bottom Gilstead
Vanns Close and Homestead
Lane Meadow
Sandhill
Gilstead
Brents Meadow
Brents Close
Upper Close
To Keyham
Turnpike Road

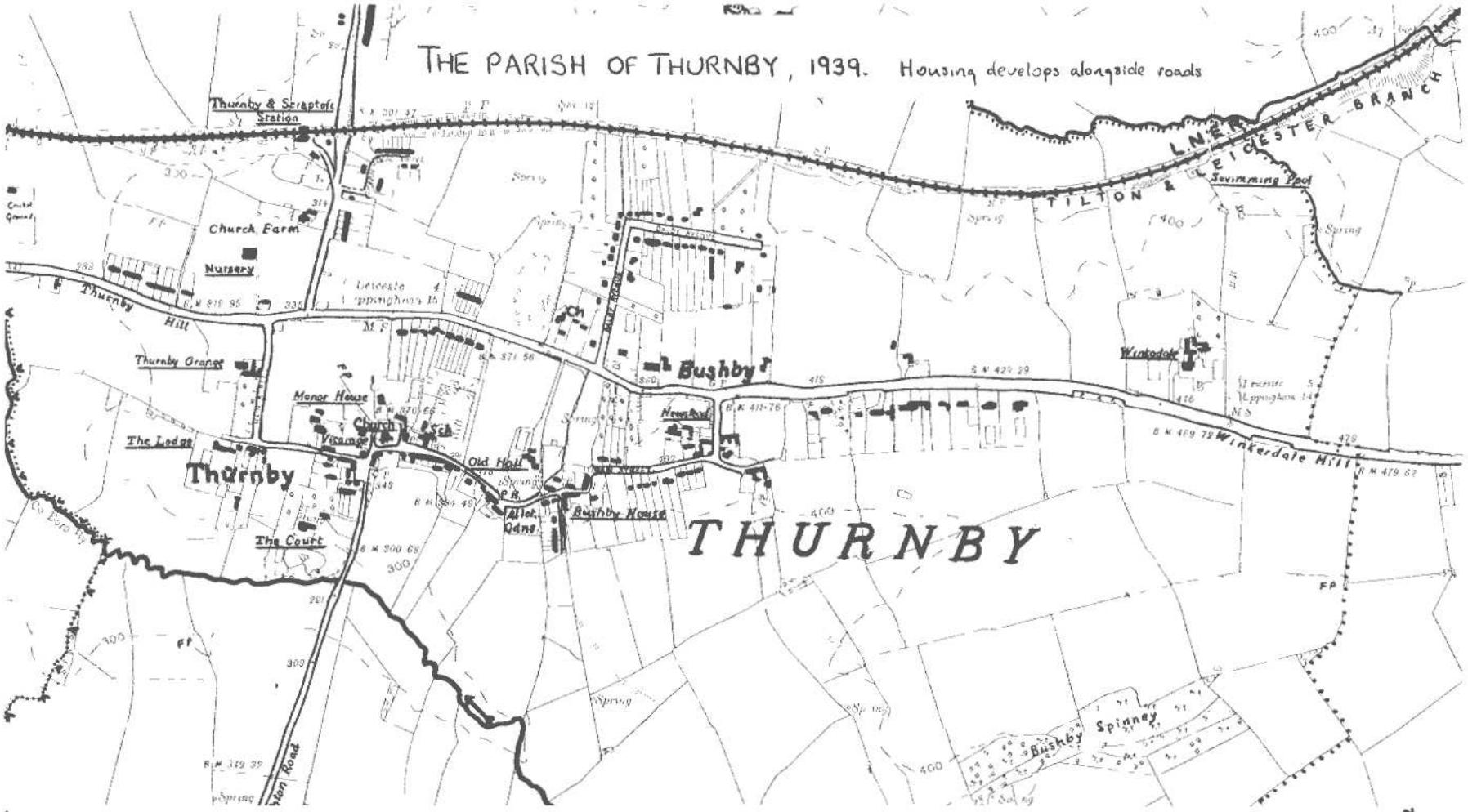
Map Fig 3



Notes of interest Area surveyed in 1884 ..... represents Parish boundary

1. St Luke's Church commands an elevated site at a junction of three streets in the centre of Thurnby. 2. The Parish is essentially rural, and farmland abounds 3. The twin villages consist mostly of a number of individual properties clustered in a ribbon development along Main Street, together with a row of small cottages sited opposite the school. 4. Thurnby Court is now built. Compare it's size with other 'large' houses. Also, note the gasometer just west of 'the Court.' 5. The route to Stoughton is a footpath beyond the brook at the foot of what is now Court Hill. Grass verges appear to encroach onto the road leading to Uppingham. 6. The Great North Railway passes the villages several hundred yards on the Scraptoft side. (N.B. Scraptoft village is an even greater distance)

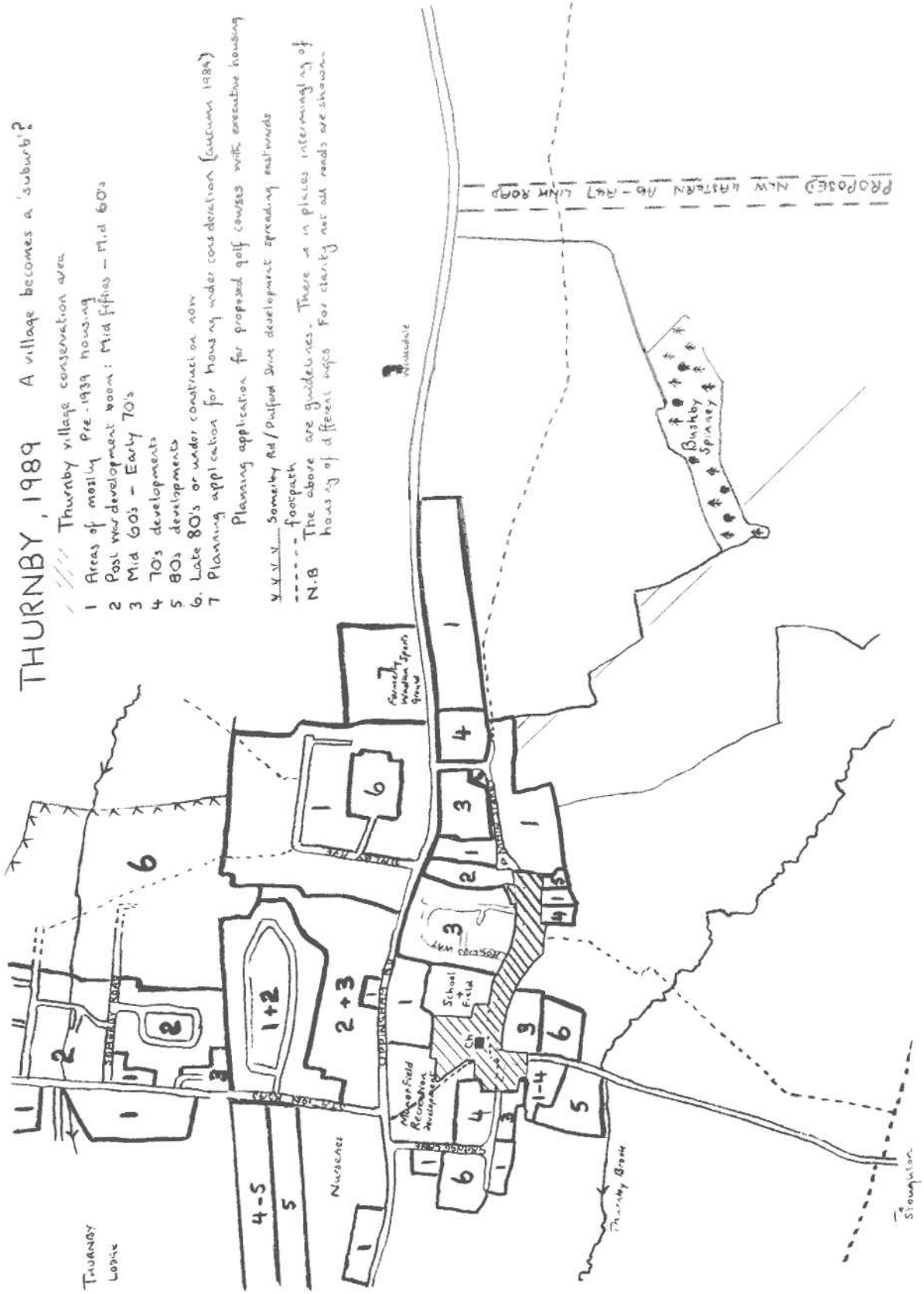
Map Fig 4


THE PARISH OF THURNBY, 1939. Housing develops alongside roads

Notes of interest. .... Parish boundary v...v.. Rural District Boundary Scale: 6 inches = 1 mile.

1. The two parishes are now one: Thurnby. 2. Housing development has taken place in several areas: Station Road with its proximity to the railway; Uppingham Road has housing built in three areas: Thurnby Hill, an area just east of Station Road junction, and beyond 'Bushby Turn'; several houses built alongside Main Street, Bushby: also, Grange Lane, Thurnby; and the new development, Dalby Avenue. Judging by the number of 'larger' detached properties are we safe to assume these are the homes of successful business people prepared to commute" from East Leicestershire to their place of work? 3. Roads have been improved: e.g. Stoughton Road. 4. 'The Court,' possibly too large to sustain, is mostly demolished. 5. The G.N. Railway is now a part of the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) 6. Note the cricket ground.

Map Fig 5


THURNBY, 1989
A village becomes a 'suburb'?
Thurnby village conservation area
1 Areas of mostly Pre-1939 housing
2 Post war development boom: Mid fifties – Mid 60's
3 Mid 60's – Early 70's
4 70's developments
5 80's developments
6. Late 80's or under construction now
7 Planning application for housing under consideration (autumn 1989)
Planning application for proposed golf courses with executive housing
Somerby Rd/Pulford Drive development spreading eastwards
footpath
N.B The above are guidelines. There is in places intermingling of housing of different ages. For clarity not all roads are shown.
PROPOSED NEW EASTERN A6-A47 LINK ROAD
Bushby Spinney
Formerly Wadlan Sports Ground
School + Field
Manor Field Recreation Development
Nurseries
Thurnby Lodge
Thurnby Brook
Stoughton

SNAPSHOTS FROM HISTORY. THURNBY OVER THE YEARS

Except for the period since its publication in 1964, Victoria County History is the fullest printed source of information and contains considerable detail about ownership and enclosure of land and economic history from the thirteenth century onwards (but the point already made about changes in boundaries must be borne in mind).

For the period of approximately 100 years up to the Second World War County Directories, especially William White's, Wright's and Kelly offer a succession of birds' eye views of the development of Thurnby. The following notes are taken from them very selectively, the dates being of the directories' publication: they have thrown up a number of queries to which we haven't yet found the answers: if any reader can help with information it will be included in the Thurnby & Bushby Newsletter.

1846 George Anthony Legh Keck is Lord of the Manor for Thurnby and patron of St Luke's Church. Neal and Johnson acted as carriers to Leicester on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The victualler of the Rose and Crown was one John Harrison (soon to be succeeded by John Hunt). Residents included a butcher and a baker (but not a candlestick maker), a tailor and a wheelwright.

1848 There is reference to a Free School, supported by voluntary contributions: this is believed to have been on Main Street, near to the present entrance to St. Luke's Close. There is also a reference, as resident, to a name already long established in the village and still very well known in Thurnby - that of Samuel Pawley, farmer and shopkeeper (and later described as a grazier).

1861 Lord of the Manor is now Hon Major Henry Littleton Powys Keck. The Wesleyans have a chapel, built in 1852 [but where is it?]. The post office (which moves frequently in subsequent years) is at David Dunkley's, his wife Sarah being the postmistress.

1863 "A farm of 55 acres belongs to the poor of Mountsorrel". This refers to a field called Mountsorrel Close - on the North side of the Uppingham Road above Bushby turn - which belonged to Nedd's Charity: in 1617 Richard Nedd, scrivener, left £300 for the purchase of freehold lands, the income to be divided among the poor of Mountsorrel.

1876 Thomas Pawley is receiver for the Post Office, mail being received from Leicester at 6.15 a.m. and despatched at 8 p.m. Named residents include James Alexander Jackson, Thurnby Court.

1878 The Bushby Feast is in the last week of October or first of November: this was a week-long holiday and time of festivity linked to All Saints Day - an occasion, whenever possible, for family reunions.

1882 Residents now include a parish clerk and the head gardener of Thurnby Court. There is a branch of Leicester Provident Dispensary [where?]. A Mrs. Barker acts as carrier from Houghton on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

1884 "Here is a station on the Great Northern branch railway from Leicester to Melton" - its stationmaster was John Brice. Thurnby Court is now "late the residence of Mr. J. A. Jackson".

1888 John Ellis and Sons (later Ellis & Everard), described as coal, corn cake and artificial manure merchants, operate from Thurnby Station. Receiver for the Post Office is now Mrs Sarah Lowe: the nearest money order office is at New Humberstone and the telegraph office at Charnwood Street, Leicester.

1894 Telegrams can be despatched from Thurnby Station. George Checkland, ironmaster, is now resident at Thurnby Court. Bushby residents include George White, police sergeant and Edwin Playster, accountant, lives at Thurnby Grange.

1895 A wall letter box set into the side of the entrance to Bushby Old Hall from the Uppingham Road is cleared at 8.10 a.m. on weekdays only. Sgt George White is described as in charge of the Police Station [his own home?].

1900 Thurnby's status is set out - in the Eastern division of the County, the hundred of Gartree, the poor law union of Billesdon, Leicester petty sessional division and county court district, the rural deanery of Gartree (second portion), the Archdeaconry of Leicester and Diocese of Peterborough. The principal landowners in Thurnby are Harry Leycester Powys-Keck and Ormond Hunt; and in Bushby, Powys-Keck and the trustees of the late E. B. Hartopp of Little Dalby.

Residents include a music teacher, no less than three dressmakers and one official who must have been extremely busy - namely George Harrison, registrar of births and deaths and vaccination officer for Billesdon subdistrict, attendance officer to Billesdon school attendance committee and sanitary inspector to Billesdon rural district council.

1908 The United Methodist Church was built on the Uppingham Road in 1908. Samual Coleman is "sub-postmaster" of the Post and Telephone Office and Telephonic Express delivery office in Grenadier House, Grange Lane, letters arriving from Leicester at 5.45 a.m. and 3.54 p.m. and being despatched at 8 p.m. The telephone exchange was later housed in Thurnby Grange.

1912 Charles Bennion now lives at Thurnby Grange.

1916 Thomas Powys-Keck is Lord of the Manor.

1922 The Manchester Cooperative Wholesale Society Ltd is now listed as principal landowner in Thurnby with Lt Col James Burns Hartopp prominent in Bushby.

1925 Thurnby residents included Edgar Backus (bookshop in Cank Street) at Kelmscott on Uppingham Road.

1928 Resident at Bushby Old Hall is Percy Lytton Baker. Williams and Crosby, Physicians and Surgeons, had a surgery above a house at the corner of Dalby Avenue.

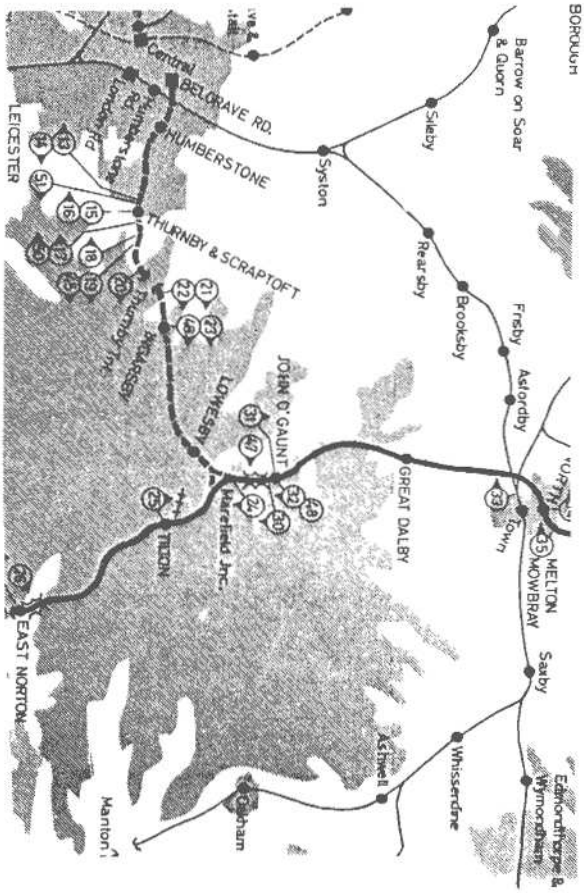
1932 Bull's Service Garage was established in the position still occupied by a garage on Uppingham Road. James Coles and Son, Nurserymen, had two separate telephone numbers.

1941 The Church described when built in 1908 as United Methodist is now named Evangelical Free Church. Thurnby now fell under the Southern Area Guardians Committee (comprising Billesdon and Market Harborough rural and urban districts) whose officers included a Director of Public Assistance and a Relieving Officer.

With the demise of County Directories (1941 was the last), the press and, since 1977, the files of the Newsletter of the Thurnby and Bushby Society have been the main sources of local information: more recently the potential effects on the Parish of the County Structure Plan and the District Council's Local Plan, and of a considerable number of building and development proposals, have been the main centre of interest and concern.

Dangerous Pastimes! at Thurnby and Scraptoft Station

Map showing local rail connections



THE AGE OF STEAM
THURNBY AND SCRAPTOFT STATION

Nineteenth century maps of Thurnby and the areas around it show that, North of the Uppingham Road, there was virtually no housing apart from farm buildings: the impact on the landscape of the coming of the railway was inevitably dramatic. Its route on its final approach from the Belgrave Road Station in Leicester lay near to and almost parallel with the Uppingham Road. Thurnby and Scraptoft Station was close against the Leicester side of Station Lane on the present site of the Telford Way shops. Eastwards of the Station its route below and in line with Dalby Avenue and then diagonally on towards Ingarsby can still be clearly seen.

The railway came comparatively late to East Leicestershire - not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and when it did one of the reasons was the increasing scale and importance of the ironstone and woollen industries. The network developed following competitive proposals from the Great Northern, Midland and the London & North Western Railway for routes in East Leicestershire and beyond: the Great Northern's original proposal was for a Newark - Leicester line via Bottesford, Melton Mowbray and Tilton which met determined opposition from landowners and the hunting fraternity, and which entered territory which Midland Railway regarded as its own: a later proposal which added a Tilton - Market Harborough link was eventually approved with the Great Northern and London and North Western operating Bottesford - Melton Mowbray - Tilton - Market Harborough jointly but Great Northern alone paying for Leicester - Tilton via Thurnby and Scraptoft which opened for goods traffic in 1882 and for passengers in 1883.

The main importance of the railways in East Leicestershire and beyond was probably always industrial but Thurnby and Scraptoft Station gave

Leicester folk access to open country after only a brief journey, and Thurnby's own residents access to routes leading eventually to the East Coast. In 1900 there was another via Tilton and Medbourne to Peterborough which with sixteen intermediate stops, not suprisingly took an hour and three quarters and did not survive the First World War.

The July 1938 timetable of the Grantham service and its East Coast links with Skegness and other resorts shows that Thurnby and Scraptoft Station gave access to a substantial service that is still well remembered: it also shows how between Harby and Stathern station and John O'Gaunt, the Leicester - Grantham line and the Nottingham - Market Harborough line were the same line.

Regular passenger services through Thurnby and Scraptoft ended in 1953 (except for a single train daily in each direction between Leicester and John O'Gaunt which, oddly, still ran in 1956). That the final passenger trains in 1962 were excursions to the coast was probably a fair reflection of the fact that this kind of traffic had always been the most profitable on these routes.

The first Station Master at Thurnby and Scraptoft was John Brice: the last - a friendly but striking figure as seen in High Leicestershire and Holidays (published by Leicestershire Museums in 1983) - Roland Storr.

Surviving memories of the trains are mixed with recollections of how well and attractively the staff maintained the Station and its surrounds, and of the rich life of flowers, birds and animals along the banks of the line towards Ingarsby.

BUILDINGS TO REMEMBER.

Its Renaissance style was described in the Victoria County History as 'elaborate', but by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner in the Leicestershire and Rutland volume of the Buildings of England series as 'coarse'. Certainly Thurnby Court was extravagant and exuberant in its scale and design. It was described in an 1878 directory as 'one of the largest residences in the County and a prominent object on the hillside', and its lavishness was matched only by Stoughton Grange (which had its own Thurnby link through the long period over which its owners were Lords of the Manor and held the patronage of St Luke's).

In some ways the extravagance of Thurnby Court was matched by the reputation of James Alexander Jackson, who built and furnished it in 1872 for a reputed £250,000: he is said to have made his money blockade-running during the American Civil War and to have been attracted to Thurnby while out hunting. The Court stood on the rise above the present Lakeside Court development and among its distinctive features were rooms decorated by Italian artists with murals illustrating the courses of a meal in the dining room; a winter garden; a swimming pool with a dance floor above it; a private reservoir; billiards room; underground stables (whose atmosphere proved unsuitable for horses) - and a gasometer prominently and separately marked on contemporary maps: it also boasted its own blacksmith. A motto on a concealed inner door read:

"None cometh in too soon
None goeth out too late"

Sadly, the costs of maintaining Thurnby Court and his own life style proved too great for Jackson who left. He was succeeded as occupant on the basis of a lease by George Checkland, owner of Desford

Top: Thurnby Court
Below: The Square and the rear of Thurnby Court

Colliery, and he died in London in 1896. He had contributed to the cost of the decoration of St Luke's in 1872 and is commemorated in a memorial window.

After standing empty for some years, Thurnby Court was demolished in 1916 in an explosion sufficiently dramatic to have been compared with the noise of the gunfire on Vimy Ridge, and some of its materials were incorporated in other local buildings. The remains

of its entrance can still be seen at the side of the Post Office on the Square together with the well head which features clearly in some photographs of the Court. A later large but more traditionally designed house on the same site as the Court was also demolished before the development of Lakeside Court.

Bushby Old Hall (previously known as The Hollies - hence Hollies Way) may have been less dramatic but was nevertheless a country house of dignity and character. An aerial photograph taken before World War Two shows it standing in virtually open country in a direct line between the Rose and Crown and the Uppingham Road. It was built in 1823 with additions earlier this century and was described in Victoria County History as 'a rectangular brick house with blank arcading, rubbed brick dressings and a stone eaves cornice'. Its last owner, who died in 1964, had been a tobacco importer and it is said that after his death thousands of empty cigar packets were found in the house.

Bushby Old Hall and its 12 acre site were sold in 1964 for £78,000 in order to make way for a development of around 60 detached houses with central heating each selling for £6500 - £7000. Pressure to convert it into an old peoples' home had been unsuccessful. The timing of the sale meant that it was 'the first land sale of this magnitude since the advent of the new government' of Harold Wilson which had succeeded that of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, and therefore a test of the possible effect of the new government's land and building policies.

Two modern photographs of the Square. It is interesting to note the similarities between these and the photographs on the previous page. The pump is a useful reference point.

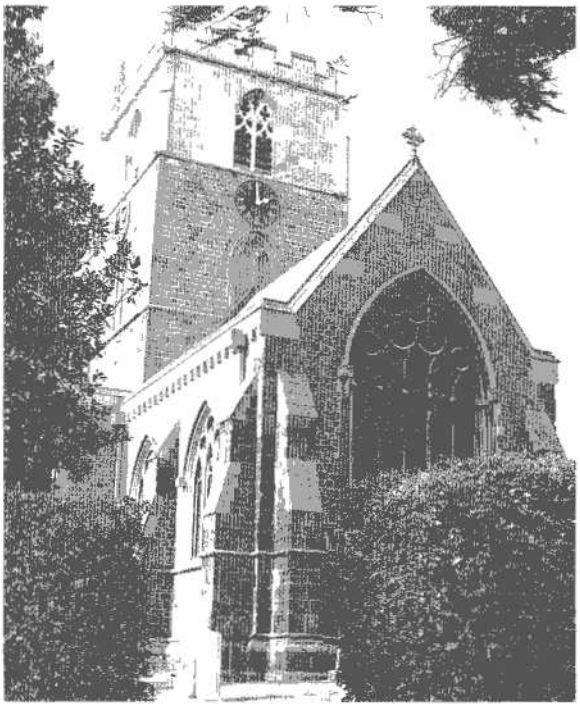
Top: Bushby Old Hall (The Hollies)
Below: Thurnby Grange

ST LUKE'S CHURCH

No doubt about it - St Luke's position at the centre of the old village ensures that, with its Norman tower, it is the single most striking building in Thurnby, perhaps best seen for the first time across the dip in the ground from about half way along the road to Stoughton.

St. Luke's is the Parish Church of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thurnby and Bushby with Stoughton, both St. Luke's and Stoughton St. Mary & All Saints Churches being in the care of a single Vicar.

What we see now, both outside the Church and even more inside it, is a "mix" of the results of a major reconstruction in 1872 (of which the most obvious feature is a wholly new chancel with many characteristic features of Victorian taste and style) together with the remains of a very much older church whose origins go back to the twelfth century. It is fascinating to realise that there are some respects in which it is still not possible to be certain about the origins and history of some features of the Church as we now see it.



St Luke's Church from the East

The scale of the 1872 reconstruction can be judged from an 1863 description of St Luke's as "formerly attached to Leicester Abbey and a cruciform building, but now consisting only of a nave, south aisle, small north aisle, and a tower. The latter stands upon four fine arches and was originally in the centre of the building, but the chancel and transepts being gone, it is now at the east end and contains four bells". Explaining the need for reconstruction after the event, John Hunt, a surgeon and leading parishioner, wrote in 1878 "Thurnby Church had become so dilapidated that it was pronounced past repair, and the only mode of meeting the difficulty was to take down the old fabric and rebuild a new church upon the old foundation, preserving as much as possible of the ancient material and the principal features ...".(see reading list)

For most of the last three centuries and until the earlier part of this century the living of St Luke's was in the gift of the lords of the manor at Stoughton Grange (initially the Beaumonts), but from the earlier part of the nineteenth century the Keck, later Powys-Keck family: now (in 1989) it is in the hands of the Martyrs' Memorial and Church of England Trust.

Much that is to be seen in St Luke's now reflects the generosity of people living in Thurnby and their dedication to their Church, especially at the time of the 1872 reconstruction and subsequently. The main work was paid for by Harry Leycester Powys-Keck (then aged 32). A Miss King, of what is now known as Dower House in Grange Lane, gave the pulpit, constructed in Caen stone, and a set of carved angels for the new chancel. She also gave a two-manual organ costing £260 which was made by Stephen Taylor of Nelson Street, Leicester. (It was last used in July 1963 and some of its pipework incorporated in the present organ).

John Hunt gave the clock, costing £200.

A memorial tablet is in honour of "the relict" (i.e. the widow) of the Rev John Allinson, a previous incumbent, who left £100 to be invested and distributed annually on New Year's Day to the poor of Thurnby and Bushby. A rather similar benefaction by John Hunt was for the payment, annually on Christmas Day, of the interest to the bellringers (on condition that the bells were rung on his birthday, a condition that is still - at least approximately - honoured).

The bells have always provided St Luke's most obvious link and focus of interest for the community, the four contained in the pre-reconstruction church being supplemented by two more in 1872 and 1952 from John Taylor, bellfounders in Loughborough. Most recently (1975) a further two bells enabling a full octave to be rung were financed through the generosity of Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Pawley and the efforts - which included dealing in scrap metal - of the bellringers (who also assembled the frame for the bells). At least once, St Luke's bells and bellringers have appeared on the national stage - a November 1952 issue of The Sphere contained a scene in the belfry as part of a Christmas advertisement by the Standard Motor Company.

Also commemorated in a colourful memorial window (and a prominent graveyard monument) is Charles Bennion who lived at the Grange before his death in 1929, and whose importance for everyone living in Leicestershire lies in his gift of Bradgate Park to the City and County in 1928. The memorial window contains fascinating detail of both bird and animal life.

An interesting insight into the social background to church attendance is revealed by the fact that in an 1888 County Directory it is thought helpful to point out that the 221 seats were "all free": this was much earlier than in many other churches where 'pew rents' survived well into the twentieth century.

A more detailed and illustrated description of St Luke's and its history is contained in an attractive and inexpensive booklet which is on sale from the Church and contains details of the famous Battle of the Bells.

The Vicar is Rev. Canon E. G. Brown, who has had a very long and happy ministry in the parish.

Sketch of St Luke's Church from School playground. L. Stuart.

THURNBY UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Thurnby United Reformed Church, or Thurnby and District Free Church as it was then known, was founded in 1906 as a Union Church to serve the villages of Thurnby, Bushby, Scraptoft, Keyham and Stoughton as there was no 'Free' church in any of those villages. The church was founded with the help and support of Melbourne Hall church. The building on the Uppingham Road was erected in 1908 for the princely sum of £386 including the land which was purchased from Captain James Burnes-Hartopp of Dalby Hall, Melton for £66. The cost of the building included 'Well and pump £15!'

United Reform Church

The fundamental principles upon which the church was founded included the following:

1. Christ's authority is supreme.

2. That Christian churches ought to consist of such persons only as give satisfactory evidence by their conversation and conduct of having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

3. That every Christian church has the right of managing its own affairs independently of the jurisdiction, control or interference of any other church or ecclesiastical authority.

Seventeen members were enrolled on 18th October 1908. Prominent families being the Lairds and the Laxtons. The church was officially opened on 16th April 1908 by Miss Hyslop, the granddaughter of Sir Edward Wood who was to have performed the ceremony but was unwell.

The church was well served by lay preachers until 1946 when, with the help of The Home Churches Fund, they were able to call a minister, the Reverend Bernard Uffen who had retired from a distinguished ministry at Beaconsfield.

At the same time the church became affiliated to the Leicestershire and Rutland Congregational Union.

During the ministry of Rev. Bernard Uffen a manse was built in Forest Rise and a church Hall was erected in 1954.

Rev Bernard Uffen retired in 1956 to be succeeded by Rev James Badcock. It was during his ministry that the church reached its peak as far as numbers were concerned, having a membership of between 80 and 100 children in the Sunday School.

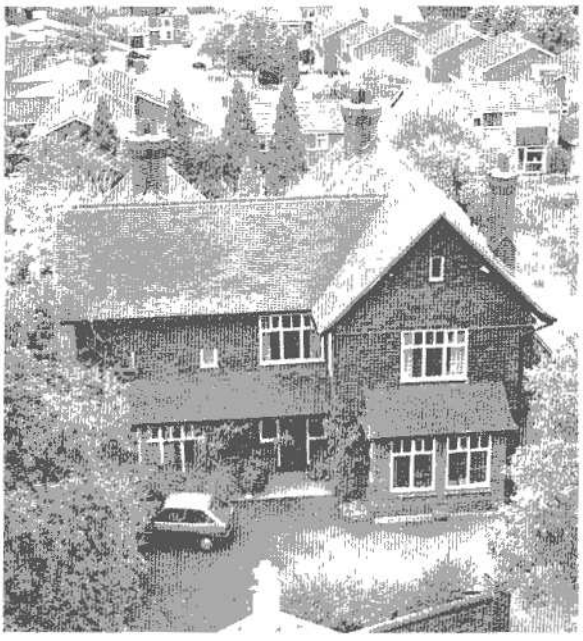
Rev James Badcock was succeeded by Rev Norman Rogers DFC in 1964 during whose ministry the church decided to join the United Reform Churches which then comprised Abbots Road, Charnwood, Thurnby and Wycliffe United Reformed Churches. Since then with the union between United Reformed and Churches of Christ, Laburnum Road (or Garden City) has joined the Group.

Rev Vaughan Skinner was called to serve Thurnby and Charnwood churches in 1980 and was succeeded by Rev Richard Goddard in 1987 who serves Charnwood, Wycliffe and Thurnby churches. The other minister in the Group is Rev Eric Freeman who is responsible for Abbots Road and Laburnum Road churches.

The church is still well served by lay preachers and visiting ministers particularly Rev Wilfred Jones of Abbots Road and Rev David Morris of The Community of Grace.

The church now has about 40 members and a Junior Church of about 25. Sunday services are at 11 a.m. and 6-30 p.m. with Holy communion celebrated twice monthly. Weekday activities include Pilots, which is the U.R.C. childrens organisation; Over 20's, which is a monthly ladies evening meeting; Ladies Fellowship which is an afternoon meeting for ladies; and a weekly Mums and Toddlers group.

P. Sherriff.



THURNBY CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

The Church of England school was founded by the Powys Kecks of Stoughton Court in 1865 as a fee-paying, one classroom school, for 40 children aged two and three quarter years to thirteen. The one teacher was unqualified.

Under a new headteacher, Edwin Bull, standards improved. The H.M.I. allowed a school grant which was only regained by the appointment of a woman teacher and the building of a second classroom over the existing one in 1895. There were then 100 children. Epidemics of mumps, scarlet fever, chicken pox, influenza, typhoid and diphtheria occurred and were sometimes fatal. From the beginning of this century a school nurse and doctor attended. Absenteeism and truancy made work for the Attendance Officer.

Under Kingsley Veasey, the next headteacher, staff meetings and a parents day were instituted and the "Scholarship Exam" was taken at 11 years. "Unsuccessful" children remained at Thurnby.

St. Luke's School & Memorial Hall from Church Tower.

In 1926 Douglas W. Mills took over the headship and a new classroom (probably wooden) was provided.

Mr. Mills was keen on Sports. Swimming was taught and boys' cricket and girls' hockey matches were played with other schools.

Hot dinners began in Mr. G. R. Palmer's time and during the war evacuees arrived. The Free Church and the rooms behind the Memorial Hall were used as classrooms. The garden was extended and children were allowed leave for potato picking.

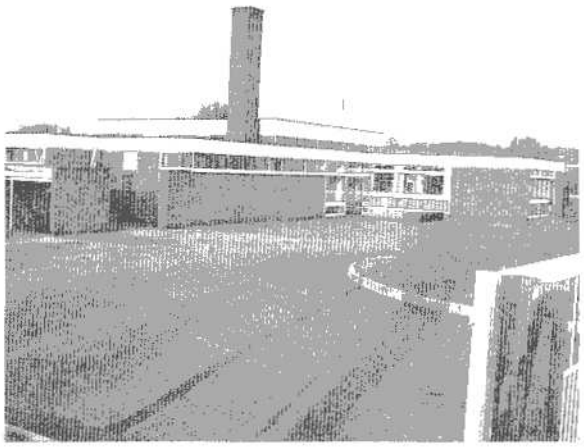
After the Victory celebrations children were coming from Houghton and Keyham and the "Squatters" camp near Stoughton, making the roll 311. An old hut was acquired for use as infants' classrooms.

Under Mr. W. H. Massey's headship, beginning in 1950, another hut was added and a clerical assistant appointed.

Mr. G. W. Brown became head in 1953 and the school was taken under the control of Leicestershire Education Committee, so that necessary improvements and extensions could take place. A playing field was made over the old sandpits behind the school and four new brick classrooms were built with a small staffroom. Over 11's proceeded to Oadby Gartree under the Leicestershire Plan and Thurnby became a Primary school. House building in the area caused overcrowding in the school and the roll crept up to 475 by April 1967. The 12 large classes used all available space and a new school was planned.

Fernvale County Primary was opened in January 1968 and Thurnby C of E renamed Thurnby St. Luke's. It now had 273 pupils and the Northern limit of its catchment area was the old railway line. Children from the Hungarton/Keyham district still came by bus to Thurnby.

Mr. Brown had a stroke in 1972 and lingered on until 1975 when Mr. Graham Impey became headteacher. A fall in the birthrate meant that by 1980 the roll was 159. When this was going to affect Gartree and Manor's numbers the Director of Education became alarmed. He imposed new rules by which children were taken from Primary schools at 10 years old. He allowed children of 4+ years to attend St. Luke's if they lived in its catchment area. So Thurnby school's numbers dropped to 121 in that year (1981).



Fernvale School

Mr. R. W. Charlton acted as head during Mr. Brown's illness and Mr. Impey's sabbatical year at University and when the latter left in 1985, Mrs. Angela Palmer became supply headteacher. Mr. A. S. Crompton was appointed to that position in 1986. Gradually numbers have risen and the present roll is 154.

There may be great changes to come in the school because this is the term when Mr. Baker's new Education Bill starts to be implemented.

FERNVALE COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL.
By the middle of the 1960's Thurnby Church of England School was so full that a site for an additional school was sought. It was decided to build it in Thurnby Brook Valley at the end of Somerby Road. Under the headship of Mr. K. Osborne, the school was opened in January 1968. It had 187 children on the roll with an age range of 5 to 11 years.

Mr. P. Greeves succeeded Mr. Osborne from September 1973 until December 1979, and since then Mrs. Audrey Page has been headteacher. With a falling birthrate and the change of age of transfer to Manor High School, the number of children on the roll fell to about 83 in the early 1980's. A 4+ class was started.

Jelson's built a housing estate at the end of Pulford Drive and Somerby Road, thereby altering the school entrance and helping to swell the numbers. In summer 1989 there were 150 children at Fernvale. Now in October 1989 there are 123 and the 10 year old children now transfer to Gartree High School.

Thurnby

Thurnby is the place to be
Great for you and great for me
There is a green to sit on
A Church to pray in
We kids have the park
So the dogs can run and bark
Post Office is bustling
Old Folks come rushing
Fox Cubs come and go
School is out so here we go!

Darren Weston.

ooOoo

Thurnby - by Helen Puszka

The smells of Thurnby are very sweet
like the fresh wind sweeping across the field
The smells of plants and flowers from the nursery across the road
The look of Thurnby is very old with small blue tiles and moss and mould
The girls and boys play in the street
Thurnby is the place to meet.

Thurnby Poem - Sophie Davies

Thurnby when I think of you
I remember:
St. Luke's Church and all my favourite sights
Like the old pump which looks like a stone igloo
And the pump in the school wall
The Memorial Hall which was built after the war to remember all those brave people who fought
And the Rose and Crown pub where by friend Sharron lives
Near the hill where I always go sledging with my dad
The Post Office next to my friend Camilla's house farm
And the beautiful sunset I look at smiling
I love the horses in the field behind our house
And the stream down by the Brownie hut
Oh Thurnby, you're my friend.

ORAL HISTORY OF THURNBY AND BUSHBY.

1. INTRODUCTION

A formal history uses information which is stored on paper and often written second hand. It gives a bare-bones outline. An oral history relies on memories, impressions and feelings which are subjective and may be less accurate but seem more real, putting flesh on the bones and telling us what it was like to live then.

This oral history looks at the years either side of World War One (W.W.1). The information was collected during conversations, rather than formal interviews, with those people whose immediate families had lived in Thurnby and Bushby (T&B) for several generations and who, themselves, had lived here for their first twenty years. The people seen, including our oldest resident were:

Violet Sturgess (nee Fielding) born 1907 of The Square in Thurnby.
May Farmery (nee Fielding) born 1910 sister of the above
Maisey Hunt (nee Voss) born 1919 of Grange Lane, Thurnby
Clara Walker (nee Price) born 1898 of Randles Close, Bushby
Julian Pawley born 1933 of Anthony Drive, Thurnby
Peter Pawley born 1928 of Uppingham Rd, Thurnby

What follows is their reminiscences, but there is still a great deal to be discovered and this history should be seen as a starting point.

2. WHAT IMPRESSIONS DO YOU HAVE OF THURNBY AND BUSHBY OVER THE YEARS?

This was the opening question of each conversation and produced answers like:
"It's awful since they pulled Miss Hubbard's house down and built St Luke's Close"
"The old way of life ended with the Thurnby Lodge Estate"
"A lot of the old clubs and societies are dying"
"At one stage you stepped up to Price's house (No. 5 Main Street). Now you step in".

All regret the passing of an old way of life and its sense of identity which was lost during the building development of the 1950's. The memories of this way of life are fond but its reality would not be acceptable today.

In these early years there couldn't have been more than 36 houses by the Spinney, Main Street, The Square and Grange Lane plus the Vicarage, Church, School, Pub, and Manor. Big houses like Holmleigh and the Red House, Bushby Hall, Newstead House and The Court are now gone.

Between the wars Dalby Avenue, Padwell Lane and houses along Main Street, Bushby, and Uppingham Road were the only developments.

3. THE FAMILIES

a) THE PAWLEYS/HERRICKS The Pawleys were T&B's only builders who started as carpenters and joiners in the mid 1800's and whose yard is opposite the new school buildings. They were wheelwrights and coffin makers as well and must have housed and buried much of T&B.

The family owned the two houses above their yard and those down to 5 Main Street. They built the houses in Padwell Lane, selling them for £550 each in the 1930's.

The Herricks owned the farm where The Swallow now stands, stretching to Dalby Avenue and lying between the A47 and the railway. The two families joined when Alf Pawley married Herrick's daughter, and Julian and Peter still live on their mother's old land.

b) THE VOSSES. Maisey's Great Uncle Pym owned all four cottages

Top: Miss Hubbard's house
Below: Memorial Hall (left)
Mrs. Price's cottage (right)

in the Square and numbers 69-75 Grange Lane. All eight were sold for £800 in the 1920's! Her father, George, was born in 3 The Square and Maisey in Grange Lane, where she still lives. George worked for the Pawleys for 50 years as well as being in the choir for that time and Sexton, Verger, and bell-ringer. He died in 1955.

c) THE PRICES/WALKERS. The Walkers "came with the railway" and lived in "the low cottage by the pub". Mrs Walker's Mother-in-law was school caretaker for 27 years until she died in July 1923.

The Prices lived in 5 Main Street following time in Church Lane and Stoughton. Old Mrs Price died in Main Street after 48 years, in 1959. Mrs Walker's father was a groom at the Court when she was born. He moved to Stoughton Estate and then became gardener at Newstead House.

d) THE FIELDINGS/COLEMANS. There were, and still are, Fieldings from Thurnby to Uppingham. This branch of the family arrived in the 1870's. The families joined when Sarah, daughter of Coleman, farmer and coalman of Firs Farm, married the Fieldings of Bushby. The aforementioned Sarah was Violet and May's mother and was known as Sally, though not to her face.

The Thurnby Fieldings seem to have made the Square their own. Sally gave birth to Violet, May, Cecil, Doris, Phyllis and Roy in Grandad's Farm and within days each child was moved back into number 1 the Square, next door. (8 people in two bedrooms, where one now lives in an extended building). At other times the family lived in numbers 3 and 4 and the telephone exchange seems to have moved with them.

Sally, one of T&B's best-remembered characters, died in 1983. Her husband, Frank, who died in 1928, was a great cricketer and coached in South Africa, Cheltenham College and Dublin. Among his protegées was Wally Hammond. At one time, in the late 1800's, Fieldings made up the whole of the local cricket team. Violet herself played for the ladies team in 1921 with people like Clara Walker and Bessy Murrell, the Rose & Crown landlord's daughter. The team wore white skirts and blouses and a red tie.

Andrew Fielding, Violet's Grandfather, lived in Bushby Lodge Farm, with his daughter, Ida, and was a mysterious figure, regarded with awe by local children in the 1930's.

Cecil Fielding took over Firs Farm until it was sold and then he moved to Oakham. Violet left in 1924 to work in Leicester, returning in 1965. May moved to Newhaven 33 years ago but is a regular visitor.

4. FAMILIES OF INFLUENCE.

Even if they've mostly gone, the families and their large houses have left their mark. The people were well-respected and before W.W.1 it was accepted that the gentry should be 'acknowledged'. Miss King of the Dower House would make certain you did and would soon tell a girl's parents if she didn't curtsy when passing!

Dower House

Some were professional people like Dr. Robinson of the Manor, Mr. Hubbard the solicitor, the Vicar and the Headmaster. The Tabberers of Bushby Hall, and Jackson of the Court, made money in industry and more like them moved in after W.W.1. The Bennions of the Grange and Keck's (later Powys-Keck's) of Stoughton were of greater influence throughout the County. The Forsells of Holmleigh were related to the Fieldings and are remembered with personal affection.

In a limited way, the Court became a playground for the Fieldings. It still stood before W.W.1 and children would play in the grounds. The greenhouses provided fruit and groups were taken around by the Fieldings. The winter gardens had been a site for dances and flower shows.

The Bennion legacy is well recorded in local street-names and in Bradgate Park. When Charles Bennion died the whole village lined the funeral route from Station to Church, and a stained glass window in the Church commemorates his life. He is remembered for providing his Rolls Royce to drive children to their confirmation in Leicester Cathedral. Tea parties were held in his garden, as well as at the Vicarage. Mrs Bennion paid for the first Scout Hut in 1936, on what is now the Memorial Hall car park. Before that, they met behind the Court Stores.

The Tabberers gave the land for the Memorial Hall.
The Powys-Keck land coincides with most of that now owned by the Co-Op. At one time you couldn't live in Stoughton unless you worked for them. Wherever they owned land they planted Scots Pines, including those in Bushby Spinney, round Winkadale, in Stretton, Gaulby, Evington Golf Course and around Stoughton Grange. Their greatest memorials are the school, built in 1865 and the Church, rebuilt in 1873.

As a footnote, the first subscribers to the Telephone were from these families:

Number 1 was the Post Office itself
2 - Forsells of Winkadale
3 - Howes of Newstead House
4 - Partridge of Bushby (Glove manufacturer)
6 - Tabberers of Bushby Hall
7 - Carr
8 - Dr Robinson of the Manor
9 - Scraptoft Hall
13 - Norman Forsell of Holmleigh

Bennions had a phone but were not connected to the local exchange. However, the exchange did end up in Thurnby Grange.

5 LIVING CONDITIONS.

Right up to W.W.1 T&B was very quiet. In the earlier years, roads were of quarry waste and very little traffic came through regularly; however, life was not idyllic. People were very supportive and knew all about each other but there was a hard side to life.

Villagers were not paid a lot but weren't really hard up. Rent was 2/- (10p) a week and they didn't seem to starve. Many kept a pig, cow or chickens. People shared. The Fieldings remember getting kidney, liver, bacon and egg for breakfast. Cold meat, bread, butter, cheese and cake were available, but the butter went runny in Summer and milk had to be held in a bucket of water. Gammon, pheasant and game may have been hung from hooks in the kitchen and nothing was wasted. Milk was delivered in churns on a pony and trap and measured in a jug by farmers like Cecil Fielding.

BUT - things were different when it came to disposing of the food once consumed.

Before W.W.1 only earth closets were used. Anyone with an old brick outhouse with a whitewashed

rectangle on the wall will have had one. An almost complete set stands behind the Square. Perhaps the most spectacular example is the "castle" which stands at the end of the wall of Bushby House, opposite the Spinney.

These outhouses contained a hole in the ground with a board over it. Ashes from the fires were thrown in as well as human waste. About every six months the lot was dug out and barrowed and dumped on the road. Local farmers, like Orton's or Fieldings also collected it and spread it on the fields.

You had to take a candle with you at night and use newspapers cut into squares and hung on a nail with string. Perhaps reading took your mind off the smell.

Buckets and cess-pits were used between the Wars. Buckets were emptied by Monty Orton, and later the Council, once a week, into a tank on a lorry. Unfortunately, their aim was not always good. Cess-pits were pumped out, but their contents did sometimes syphon back into the house if there was a lot of rain. The waste was, again, spread on the fields.

Mains sewage arrived at last in 1953, laid by the Pawleys.

Water was collected in rain barrels but most came from pumps around T&B. The pump in the Square was used until the late 1940's. It was crystal clear, and the stream underneath can still be heard. If you used the School pump you were asked to pay 1/- (5p) a year.

Mains water arrived in the late 40's and early 50's. The houses round the Square shared a communal tap set in the wall behind Number 4, and this had to be thawed out with a candle in winter. Plumbing was installed in all 8 houses in the late '50's and the rented properties had bathrooms put in during 1962.

Clothes were boiled in coppers kept outside back doors. The dolly tub and mangle were the only machines used. Monday was washday and ironing was done on Tuesdays.

The houses themselves did not have damp-courses and were lit with oil-lamps and candles. Many shared yards and were over-crowded. A mother, father and 6 children may have shared a two-bedroom house with bolster between sisters and brothers in bed to preserve propriety.

6. THE SCHOOL AND CHILDHOOD.

Thurnby School was built in 1865 with money provided by the Keck family. However, the second storey wasn't added until the 1890's and the grounds were different in this period. The only field was the present raised section where the Playgroup hut stands. The rest was a sand pit. It went out of use during W.W.2 when the Army used it to train soldiers in vehicle recovery up the steep sides. The pit was overgrown and caught fire two or three times creating a village event. It was filled with waste from Spencefield Lane when the steep slope down to Uppingham Road was graded and the road widened.

The present piece of front playground to the left of the double gates was a garden, kept by the boys, who gave produce to the Johnsons over the road. Girls did knitting and sewing.

Children went to school between the ages of 4 and 14. You could leave at 13 if you had a job four miles away from home, but not in a factory; however, May Fielding did leave at 13 to help her mother and Violet went on a secretarial course, going to work in the Rutland Street Telephone Exchange at the age of 15. Mrs Walker got her first job through the Girls Friendly Society (GFS) magazine when 16. She worked at Eccles Vicarage near Manchester and learnt

cooking, being paid 4/- (20p) a week. Maisey worked for the Jeffries at 56 Main Street in service at the age of 14. Mrs Walker cooked for dinner parties. As transport improved so people could go further afield. Most boys worked on local farms or in local trade.

All those interviewed say that they thoroughly enjoyed school-days and a lot of that seems due to Mr. Ball, the School master, who came in the 1890's and retired in the early 1920's. He was Welsh and strict but rarely used the cane; when he did it was usually on the boys who came back late from following the hounds at lunchtime. He demanded perfect writing and all were taught scripture and arithmetic each morning. Children said of him -
"Mr. Ball is a very good man. He tries to teach us all he can.
Reading, writing and arithmetic, He never forgets to give us the stick
When he does he makes us dance, Out of England, into France;
Out of France and into Spain, Over the hills and back again".

He lived at 5 Main Street before Mrs. Price and when his wife and daughter died he married Florry Harrison of Church Lane, daughter of the attendance officer! When he retired he moved to Uppingham Rd and is still remembered in the 1930's, going to church and sitting in front of the pulpit.

Before W.W.1, there were three teachers at a time, including Miss Radford, Miss Fieldhouse and Miss Else. They were expected to teach all age groups from 4 to 14 (unlike today).

Mr. Veasey replaced Mr. Ball but he moved quickly to Syston. Mr. Mills came and then four staff were employed.

Children came from Stoughton, Keyham and Scraptoft and all around. They had to walk, even the four year olds. Those from a distance heated their puddings on the Top Room stove and Miss Else used to pick out the currants and take bacon rinds for herself.

Other regular visitors were 'Dash' Coleman and "Nitty" Norah. 'Dash' was Violet's Grandfather's dog and pictures of him still exist. "Nitty" was the Nit-nurse.

Once out of school children made their own entertainment. They skipped, used hoops, played whip and top and 'snobs' (5-stones). These were played in the road. Sticking (collecting kindling) was a constant activity, and you could always earn a penny by opening the gate across the road to Stoughton for travellers. In winter there was sledging down Court Hill and skating on the lake.

This was an age of innocence. "We didn't know a thing". "Mother wouldn't even show her feet". Swearing was really naughty and smoking and drinking were real sins.

Sunday brought Sunday School.

7. ENTERTAINMENT, FEASTS AND LEISURE.

"All life was focussed on Thurnby". There was no television and poor transport. You had to find your own entertainment. People tended to go to bed and get up early and lighting was poor so activities at night were limited. The school was open in the evenings, providing a reading room with papers, but only for the men. In these early years the Church Army gave lantern shows as well. Whist Drives took place regularly. Other regular activities were children's games in the street, walks, and some houses had harmoniums. Tea parties happened in the grounds of the Court, Vicarage and Grange.

Once transport improved in the 1920's people were able to travel to dances in surrounding village

Halls or School Rooms like Houghton, Evington, Billesdon, East Norton and Illston; however, they happened "once in a blue moon" in the Village. Before W.W.2 the old army hut behind the school was used regularly and lessons were given in dancing.

In the early '30's, the Trocadero cinema was built, beside the tram terminus. Pictures started at 1.30 It cost 6d (2.5p) to get in and 2d each way on the bus. Of course, if you walked one way you could spend the money on ices. This happened quite often as you weren't always sure if the buses were running, but as this involved children as young as five one marvels at such times of innocence.

There were clubs and societies. The W.I. had started. The cricket team played on the horse field by Wintersdale Road. Football was played on the Station field, dodging the cow-pats. People met in the Rose and Crown clubroom, above the public bar and there was singing on a Saturday night. Badminton was a thriving club in the Village Hall.

Some events are well remembered from these early years. Children did Maypole dancing but at least one of them thought it "bloody daft". Empire Day and St George's Day were always celebrated. Harvest and the main Church festivals were very important with houses in the square providing extra chairs for a packed church. The Village Fete was held in Thurnby Lodge grounds.

The big Feast of the year was the Wakes Week leading up to St Lukes' Day in early November. People would be in and out of each others' houses and Violet and May remember their Grandfather killing a dilling pig (runt) and Granny using "all of it bar the squeal" for meat, pies and sausages. A pig was on the table with an orange in its mouth. At the end of the week a dance was held in the Club-Room with fiddlers playing.

Thurnby and Bushby were right out in the country and were the first villages along what was then an open country lane beyond the Trocadero. In the summer groups would day-trip to Thurnby from Leicester, by train, and Thurnby became a small resort. The pub field would be full of trippers, with barrels of beer. Locals provided tea and hot water.

Home field, behind Firs Farm, was used by the Ragged School of Leicester for its annual outing and missionaries would erect a marquee there. Children played and ran races. Teas were provided by "Aunt Emily" from number 4, The Square, and Firs Farm, charging 6d (2.5p) a jug "and bring the jug back".

Apart from that you could always go to 'Skeggy' for a holiday.

8. TRANSPORT

The railway has already been well-documented and was the only sure way of getting to Leicester. The buses didn't start until 1923-24 when Stan Bull ran one. Before that there were carriers who ran horses and carts between Houghton and Leicester, carrying anything and everything. You could send a package, plank or a child to Leicester in the carters cart and it would arrive. Frewin Gray was well-known and a booklet has been written about him. One larger than life carrier was Rose Palin who got drunk regularly and whose horse knew its own way home. She is described as half man, half woman and very strong.

On the farms horses were still used after W.W.2 for carrying stooks of grain. You didn't have to stop and start a horse. It would follow you and feed itself. Traction engines drove threshing machines and did heavy work up to W.W.2 but were being replaced by tractors in the late 1930's.

SHOPS AND FACILITIES.

Just after W.W.1 a man could earn £2/10/0 per week (£2.50) and a woman £1/0/0 (£1). There wasn't a lot to spend but there wasn't a lot to spend it on. Before W.W.1, 1d a week gave you four bags of sweets, or 8 pints of skimmed milk.

The two main shops were Mrs. Antill's Court Stores in the Square and Mrs. Tailby's, later run by Miss May and Mrs. Talbot, which operated from the middle of the three cottages below Pawley's yard.

Mrs. Antill is remembered as being petite; "a lovely, little old chubby-faced lady". She was very sharp. She eventually died in the 1950's. The store was a paradise for children with hundreds of tins of biscuits, Wimbushes cakes from Birmingham, sugar in blue paper bags and a huge stock of chocolate which seemed to have been there for years. You could even pick your sweets and weigh out the sugar.

T&B had a Post Office and Telephone Exchange which were both much travelled and centres of village life. The Fieldings/Colemans ran them from the 1880's and the Post Office started off next to the pub. The Exchange moved from Firs Farm to Grenadier House in Grange Lane and back to No 4 the Square from 1925 to 1947.

In the early days you knew someone wanted to call on the phone when the relevant tag dropped. You then pushed the right peg and cable into the right holes. The telephone exchange, however Heath Robinson, was a communication centre in W.W.1. Whenever a Zeppelin threatened, the exchange was called from Leicester and a child was sent to tell the Sergeant who alerted the Village. Granny Coleman was the first to announce the end of W.W.1 in Thurnby. She sent a message round the Village and Mr. Ball, the Schoolmaster, sent home all the children whose fathers were in the forces.

THE MANOR - THURNBY

Introduction. This article was written as the result of an initial approach from Arthur Howell, gardener at the Manor since 1965. It follows from a visit to the grounds and conversations with Arthur himself, Violet Sturgess and May Farmery, and Peter and Julian Pawley.

Other sources may be found but it is a feature of the Manor that it, and its owners, have maintained their privacy over the years. Much information is tied up in that privacy and there seem to be as many questions raised as answered.

Much has been lost with the deaths of Captain Roberts-George, late husband of the present owner, and of Arthur "Henry" Smith, gardener from 1926, both of whom died in 1984. Henry had lived in Padwell Lane since 1935.

What follows is an attempt to draw together some of the remaining information about the Manor and to shed light on a historic part of Thurnby which has been largely hidden and which may soon be lost altogether.

The House and its Grounds. The Manor House has been a place to live in rather than to show off; looking more homely than the Victorian flamboyancy of its counterparts, Thurnby Grange and Lodge, and, of course, the Court. It remains as the last of the "big" houses, still to be lived in by the last of the old gentry.

The present brick house stands on the stone foundations of the original, believed to have been built in the reign of Queen Anne. A similar stone base can be seen in the end wall of the Dower House. Some of the interior walls are of original stone. However, the present structure could be twice the size of the first house. A further restructuring occurred when another storey was added in the

last century. There are many other signs of windows and doors being resited and reshaped, but nevertheless the whole results in an attractive mixture of brickwork.

This century has seen the addition of a surgery for Dr. Robinson and an air-raid shelter (with a tile roof) attached to the side of the house, being more dry, warm and convenient than the concrete blockhouse in the garden!

In the grounds stands a thatched coach-house, to be seen backing on to the playing field. Its back entrance was used as an extension to house the bonnet of a Rolls Royce which would otherwise not fit. A sycamore tree damaged the roof and has now been pulled down.

There is also a familiar outhouse which shows all the signs of having seen a large, two-seater earth-closet.

By the back door stands a well-preserved pump and covered well. Unfortunately, many if not all of the lead ornaments and flower tubs in the gardens were stolen in two raids in 1975 and again in 1988.

The gardens must have been their best in the 1960's when Arthur and Henry were working together. Slides show wonderful displays and the lawns and grounds were a show-piece. Since then, while far from derelict, some ground has been turned over to more allotment and the pond has been filled in.

The original grounds have been extended twice in this century. The hedge running from the gate onto the Manor Field follows the footpath and then cuts back towards the coach-house. This bounds a wedge of land bought by the Roberts-Georges which is now laid out as ornamental gardens. It appears that the Manor land extends across the gateway, however it is debatable who owns the right of way from the Main Street, past the Vicarage. Many similar, unclaimed pieces of land exist in Thurnby and may date back to the incomplete dispersal of the Powys-Keck estates.

A second purchase includes the land at the top of Church Lane, used to build a hard tennis court (now grassed over). The cottages are also owned by the Manor, their inclusion in the sale being a condition of purchase.

The Cottages

The soils are rich loams but running through the property is the belt of fine golden sand which stretches from the sand-pit (now the school field) to Herrick Drive. This sand apparently accounts for severe cracking in the fabric of the Vicarage, built in 1910, and now supported on a concrete raft.

The Owners. Up until the 1900's the Hunt family owned the Manor. Their memorial plaques still hang in the Church. Their memory lingered for some years as the Manor Field was called Hunt's Field at least until 1926. The church bells are still rung, on July 1st every year, on the occasion of John Hunt's birthday. £100 was invested to pay the bell-ringers for this service. It is claimed that he said that he "kept the devil chained in the cellar" to scare off servants who had a liking for his wine.

Dr. Robinson had moved in by 1905. There was one daughter, Eileen, who stayed on to look after her father when Mrs. Robinson died. She moved to Houghton and seems to have died there. She is also remembered being in a pram at the time of Sally Fielding's wedding. She later made a nightdress-case as a wedding present for Violet.

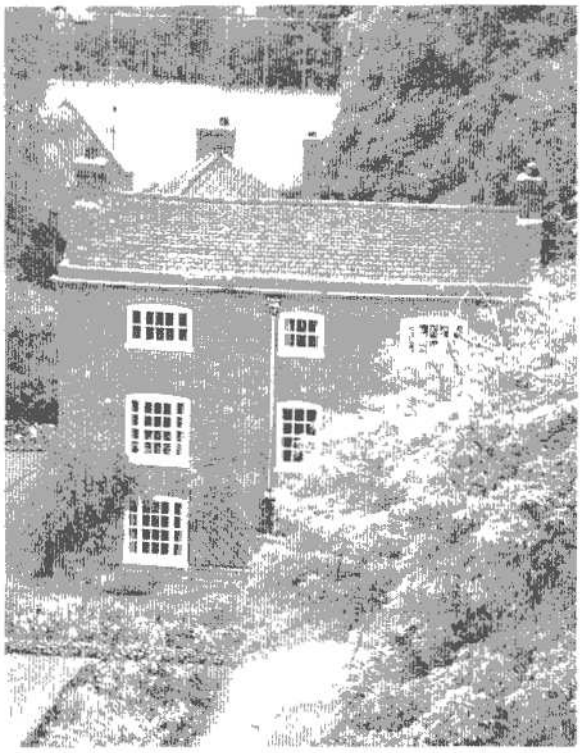
The Manor was bought in the mid-1920's for Mrs. Roberts-George by her father, Mr. Turner. It was renovated and the gardens cleared, as they had run down in the Doctor's later years. Captain and Mrs. Roberts-George were married in 1919 and moved in in 1928. He was an officer in World War One, was wounded, went to India and returned to live in Stoneygate. He eventually ran the family firm, Leicester Malting and Brewing Co. until he retired in the 1950's, the firm being taken over by Ansell's. The Captain was High Sherriff of Leicestershire in 1952, on the District Council, involved in the British Legion and in the locality, but formal entertaining lapsed from the late '50's and the family seems to have become increasingly introverted until even strawberry teas on the lawn for the Evergreens ceased. The Captain is now buried in the Churchyard and the access door from the Manor grounds is now bricked up.

Very few locals seem to have worked at the Manor other than Henry Smith and part-time cleaning ladies like Mrs. Impey from Bushby. Before the war there were always two cooks, but since then only a cook-housekeeper and, latterly, a nurse have been employed.

The future. The Manor is the last of the 'lived-in' big houses of Thurnby and Bushby, but will it remain so? It has a grade three preservation order attached so that it cannot be pulled down. However, will the delightful grounds, trees and buildings be preserved? Will it be bought and cared for in spite of the need for some considerable investment or will it be converted and altered forever, thus marking the end of an era and changing irrevocably the character of the oldest corner of the village.

R. Brown. 4.11.89

The Manor



Before the publication of the first Directory, the Leicester Journal had on 28 February, 1800 reported that George Popple, driver of a station wagon, had been robbed and 'left for dead' in the Parish of Thurnby by two men - one tall and 'black looking', having on a rough greatcoat, short boots, 'and pitted with the smallpox': the other a little man, fresh coloured, also in a shabby loose greatcoat. Each was armed with a large bludgeon: they stole thirty shillings in silver and a one pound note from Popple - a reward of forty pounds for apprehending them was offered - and, after the attack, they made off along the road to Uppingham.

JAMES COLES & SONS (NURSERIES) LTD

This family business was begun by James Coles in 1914 on 8 acres of land situated behind the spinney belonging to Mr. John Faire of Evington Hall, on Spencefield Lane.

In the early 1930's he purchased the 12 acre field at Thurnby on the corner of Uppingham Road and Station Lane. Three greenhouses were built before the 1939-45 war and the first plants were grown in pots. During the war Women's Land Army girls helped those not enlisted to grow some vegetables and tomatoes and lettuce under glass.

After the war Mr. Fred Coles and Mr. Bill Coles, the sons of the founder, purchased from Mr. Shakespeare 26 acres on the south side of Uppingham Road and increased tree production. Many of these trees were sold to the 'New Town' developments. In the 1950's Mr. Sherriff was restricted from building beyond the east end of Wintersdale Road and agreed to exchange 7 acres there for land on Spencefield Lane where Davenport Road was built.

In 1963 a 7 acre field next to Wintersdale Road was rented from Mr. Parker for about 10 years. By then other land at Barkby had been acquired from the En Tout Cas Company.

In recent years the expansion has gathered pace and the total acreage is now around 300 with over 4 acres of rented glass at Spalding. 250,000 trees are produced each year plus around one million shrubs and trees in pots. The staff, including many local people, approaches 100.

Although most local people will know Coles' as the retail plant centre at Thurnby, the business is mainly wholesale, supplying trees and shrubs throughout the country to landscapers and local authorities. S. Haines.

Top: Hill Court Flats
Below: Houses in Telford Way on line of old railway

THE BEGINNING OF SCOUTING IN THURNBY

One Sunday morning in 1934, the Vicar of Thurnby cum Stoughton, the Reverend Alfred Ogilvy, asked the boys of the choir to stay behind after service to meet a man who was very keen to start a Scout Troop in Thurnby. George Teear, who was then a chauffeur working for a family in Great Glenn, lived at Stoughton and under his guidance the 75th Leicester (Thurnby) Troop was born. Informal meetings were held in the homes of some of the elder boys and Donald Miles from Dalby Avenue and Frank Stevenson who lived in one of the houses behind the Court Stores (now Thurnby Hill Stores) became the first Patrol Leaders and were joined within a month by Victor Wood (of Oakham) who became first Troop Leader.

Frank Stevenson senior was one of the Churchwardens at the time and it was in their wooden garage that early scout meetings took place. The Scout Hut in Main Street was erected in late 1935 and paid for by Mrs. Bennion from the Grange. (Ironically the notice of George Teear's death appeared in the Leicester Mercury within a week of the old Scout Hut being demolished after the new headquarters on Court Hill was complete.)

Cubs started in 1937 (the Yellows and Tawneys being the first two sixes). Don Miles was the first Akela and Peter Pawley among the very early recruits.

Victor Wood was Scoutmaster at the beginning of the Second World War but he very soon went off to join the Air Force and was later regarded as a troop hero when he was awarded the DFC for his exploits as a bomber pilot. Others were not so lucky, Geoffrey Payne has a war grave in the churchyard; he died as a gunner in a bomber and a number of older scouts attended his funeral to mark his previous connection with the troop.

David Cooper followed and did a tremendous amount of work to build up the troop until he too joined the Air Force. He, of course, returned after the War and is well-known to a more modern generation of scouts and cubs.

When David joined up there was no leader as such to fill the gap but we were fortunate in having help with meetings during the week from the Scoutmaster of the Oakham Troop, Bill Steel, who worked and had lodgings in Leicester. This also led to some combined activities and camps. The main organization of the troop fell to the Court of Honour and John Thorne, Ted Bates, Peter Pawley and Keith Rands were prominent in this respect.

Camping always appeared to be a major activity, the first annual camp was held at Great Holland near Clacton-on-Sea in 1935 followed by Robin Hood's Bay in 1936 and Penmaenmawr in 1937. Transport was generally by train. Camps at Skeffington and Oakham were held during the War and senior scouts from the group attended a camp with the Oakham troop at the end of the War, at Overstrand near Cromer, actually travelling back by train on VJ Day.

In 1946 an appeal was issued for help in re-furbishing Gilwell Park and two members of the troop responded by cycling to London for a week during their holidays to assist in a small way.

In 1948 a big county rally was held at Belvoir Castle, the 75th travelled by train from Thurnby Station up the line to Redmile and when Lord Rowallan, the Chief Scout of the day, visited the rally over the weekend, a picture of him talking to members of our particular Group appeared in the Leicester Mercury.

At a later stage members of the Group were closely involved in the

early development of John's Lea Wood camp site.

From 1951-1989.

More extensions to the old H.Q. were carried out in 1951, 1957 and 1963. The 50's was an unusually rewarding and active period with camps in the Isle of Wight, North Wales, Ulster and Scotland, to name a few.

Alex Diamant was Group Scout Master for a period during the early sixties, and was followed in 1965 by the present Group Scout Leader (the title had now been changed) Peter Watson. In 1967 the 1st Guide Company was formed and run by a Mrs. Northaway. Soon after, the Brownies started up with all the four Sections meeting in the old Scout Hut which was now bursting at the seams (literally!) and the need for a new and bigger H.Q. had become a priority.

New Headquarters

G.S.L. Peter Watson together with Chairman Geoffrey Gill, began fund raising in earnest to raise many thousands of pounds by events and public subscription and by the late '70's, together with grants, enough money had been raised to buy and erect a building. The Group was indeed most fortunate to be offered the present site as a gift by the late Mr. Anthony Lillie, a local farmer and business man - a benefactor whose generosity can never be repaid.

Building work started in 1980, and on Sunday February 22nd 1981, in deep snow, the present H.Q. on Court Hill was officially opened by the Scout County Commissioner Lord Crawshaw and Mrs. Jean Hartridge, Guide Commissioner, as a joint H.Q.

In 1984, the Group celebrated its 50th Anniversary, many former Scouts and Guides attending the celebrations.

S. Hummel, P. Pawley

Children dancing

Spot the difference!!

WILDLIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction.

May I begin by thanking all those who took the trouble to complete questionnaires. In all 202 were returned, which was a very good proportion of those sent out. This is, to my knowledge, the first survey of its kind that has ever been done in Leicestershire, and your enthusiastic response has certainly made in all worthwhile.

The amount of information you provided about the wildlife of Thurnby and Bushby was almost overwhelming, or would have been if we had not had the use of a computer to analyse the questionnaires. There were no less than 2929 answers just to the specific questions asked (478 on mammals, 1821 on birds, 69 on pond life and 561 on butterflies).

There is, in addition, a great deal of extra information, especially about birds, that we have not had the time to put on the computer and to fully digest.

Now to the results. What I am able to give you at the moment is some idea of the frequency with which particular kinds of animals were recorded and that is certainly very interesting in itself. Some time we may also be able to work out whether there is any pattern in the records across the parish, but that will involve a lot more work on them. Whilst on this subject, I should like to express my thanks to Mrs. Nona Finch, Ecological Assistant with the Leicestershire Museums Service, who has been responsible for inputting and analysing all the answers to the questions.

1. Mammals.

Over half of you have had hedgehogs in your gardens at some time, 45 during 1988, 22 during 1987 and 47 prior to 1987.

Over half of you sometimes see bats over your gardens, but only 12 know of the location of a bat roost. Although the breeding females of the commonest bat, the pipistrelle, assemble together in communal creches and a lot of bats can be hunting out of one roost in the summer, it would seem likely that there are more than 12 roosts in the parish. I should very much like to hear about any bats or roosts that you come across in the future.

Foxes have visited well over half your gardens, 86 in 1988, 18 in 1987 and 26 prior to 1987. This is what might be expected in a parish on the edge of Leicester, since we know from a survey by the City Wildlife Project that they reach right to the centre of Leicester at night. Although most of the references to foxes relate to sightings, I was sorry to hear of the loss of one pet rabbit to a fox. On the positive side, one of you, on the edge of the built up area, had the pleasure of watching a vixen with four cubs in the spring of this year.

One fifth of you have a cat, or are regularly visited by next door's cat. Of the small mammal prey you have been able to recognise, mice, probably field mice, top the bill with 37 reports, followed by voles (the ones with the shorter tails) with 19 reports and shrews with 17 reports. Amongst other mammals, a mole, rat and rabbit were also listed as prey, together with, of course, a large number of birds.

So far as other mammals are concerned, the one which I should obviously have included in the questionnaire is the grey squirrel, which was mentioned by 17 of you as a regular or occasional visitor to your gardens, in one case raiding a bird table. The only other mammals mentioned were what were thought to be field mice, making 'periodic invasions indoors', hares (in fields east of Pulford Drive), and

lastly, 'a cream-coated ferret'. The last must have been an escapee.

2. Birds.

The league table for birds visiting your gardens made quite unexpected reading, with the magpie, once regarded as a rather shy bird, topping the table, with 166 records. It is of course a very conspicuous bird and, ignoring its predatory habits, a very beautiful one. Close behind it, more predictably, were the starling, with 160 records and robin with 155. The other birds I listed scored as follows: house sparrow 140, song thrush 138, blue tit 124, greenfinch 122, hedge sparrow (or dunnock) 117, wren 113, great tit 111, blackbird 93 and house martin 61. The low position on the list of the blackbird intrigued me, since I would have expected it to score higher than song thrush. Perhaps song thrushes move around more, or have territories encompassing several gardens.

The nesting league table is rather different, headed by the blackbird in 44 of your gardens. After that come: blue tit (presumably in nest boxes) 23, house sparrow 22, hedge sparrow and starling 15, song thrush and robin 14, wren 13, house martin 12, great tit 5, magpie 3 and greenfinch 1. These figures must reflect to some degree at least the difficulty of finding the nests. Certainly house martin nests are obvious enough, and it would be difficult to miss the huge twiggy basket of a magpie's nest, especially after the leaves have dropped off. Greenfinch's nests on the other hand are difficult to find in the upper part of hedges, despite the dreary and monotonous song of the male.

So far as other kinds of birds are concerned, there were a number that I should have put on the list, at least as visitors. These include carrion crows, which, although wary, will come down onto lawns, wood pigeons, which can be an absolute pest in young cabbage crops, and gulls (probably either common or black-headed) which are often seen overhead and will swoop down for crusts of bread. 46 of you included notes of birds other than the 12 I listed, sometimes just one notable species such as cuckoo or sparrowhawk. It was particularly pleasing to have so many sightings of sparrowhawks remembering that it ceased to breed in Leicestershire for a while in 1950's and 1960's.

Pride of place, so far as records of additional species is concerned, has to go, however, to two particularly keen families, at 48 Charnwood Drive, where the Hawkers have recorded 45 species in all, including sightings of such rarities as buzzard and goshawk and the Glentons at 76 Pulford Drive, where a chart of observations of birds seen in or from the garden over 21 months included 44 species, with extra records from the fields nearby of kingfisher and snipe.

The sheer volume of the extra bird records is such that we have not yet had the time to put them on the computer and analyse them. However I have done composite list for the whole parish and it comes to 77 definites and 2 possibles. A copy of this list is available. It includes those seen both in and over your gardens. The second category is really only for those with good binoculars and experience of identifying birds in flight. It has been said that, if you lived long enough, the whole of the British bird fauna could be seen from one spot and, certainly, wigeon, goshawk, buzzard and ring-necked parakeet are not species that I would have expected to have turned up in or over Thurnby. I have checked through the list of British breeding birds and there are only about 7 species other than those listed which you could expect to see in the more rural parts of the parish. They are stock dove, little owl, redstart (I did catch a glimpse of a cock redstart once in

the back garden of 1, Charnwood Drive), wheatear (on passage), whitethroat, garden warbler (in Bushby Spinney) and corn bunting. Otherwise you have, between you, seen the lot!

3. Pond animals.

Almost exactly a quarter of you, 49 to be precise, have ponds in your gardens, but interestingly, a further 22 of you, without ponds, reported visiting amphibians, either frogs or smooth newts. Of the ponds, 8 have breeding frogs, 4 breeding toads, 5 breeding smooth newts and just 1 breeding great crested newt. Field ponds, certainly ones in any rural parts of the parish, and your garden ponds are all that there is between these creatures and extinction locally. In each case about double the number of each amphibian was reported by you to visit but not to breed, and I suspect that some breeding may go on undetected, especially in the case of newts.

Ponds also harbour or attract many other kinds of animals, whether small ones such as water boatmen, damselflies and dragonflies or larger ones such as ducks and herons (reported by 11 of you). Several of you had had occasional visits from kingfishers, and there might have been more records of this bird if we got up as early in the morning as they do!

There were, to my surprise, no records of grass snakes visiting ponds, even in gardens on the outskirts of the village, although there was just one other mention of this, Thurnby's only reptile. I do remember one report of grass snake from a garden in Charnwood Drive that backed on to the dismantled railway line during my time in Thurnby. One or two of you reported seeing 'lizards', but from past experience these were almost certainly smooth newts in the terrestrial stage of their life history. They are brown and dry-skinned, and the males lack the lovely crest and bright colours of their aquatic phase, but they move much more slowly than lizards and if you look at them closely they lack the long fingers and scaly skins. They are sometimes dug up in the autumn and winter, which means that you have disturbed their winter hibernation quarters. Whilst we are on the subject of aquatic animal life, I was very interested to have, from one of the few gardens in Thurnby with a stream running through it, records of bullhead, a small fish of the faster flowing parts of watercourses.

4. Butterflies.

The response to the questions in this section was very illuminating, indicating that many of you have as much difficulty as I do identifying butterflies that move rapidly through our gardens, although the ones that sit around in the late summer on buddleia bushes and ice plants are a little easier to name. Whites were reported from 175 of your gardens and I fear that most of these are probably the large white, with the black-spotted yellow caterpillars, and the small white, with the green caterpillars, which wreak such havoc in brassica crops. Green-veined whites are also quite common, but they confine their attentions to wild members of the cabbage family, such as jack-by-the-hedge.

The red admiral was the next most commonly noted butterfly, with 142 records and it may be worth mentioning that it, like the painted lady, for which there were 35 records, is an immigrant from the Continent. They both breed, but their caterpillars rarely if ever survive the winter. Small tortoiseshells, which are a resident species, breeding on nettles, came third with 85 records, rather fewer than I would have expected, but they are not quite so distinctive as red admirals or peacocks, for which there were 75 records.

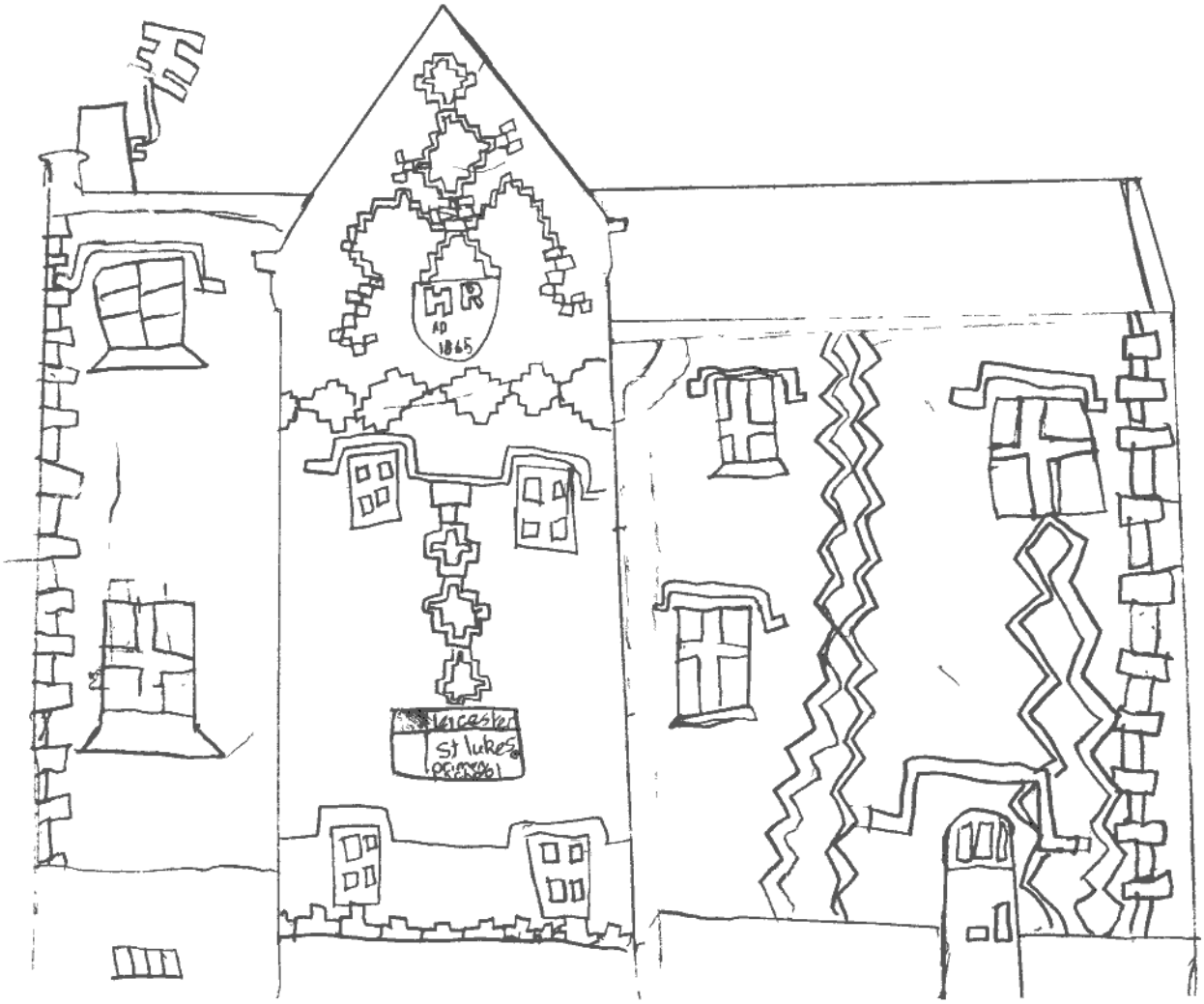
A good total of 10 further species of butterflies were recorded and, again, I think that it is the difficulties of identification which prevent more of you from adding to your garden lists. The species, with the number of definite records, were: brimstone (14), orange-tip (12), comma (6), gatekeeper (3), common blue (2), holly blue (2), wall (2), meadow brown (2), small heath (1) and small copper (1). Of these, the comma and gatekeeper are worth special mention since they have undergone substantial fluctuations in population in recent years, but are both doing well at the moment. Commas are particularly fond of rotting apples late in the summer, on which they can get quite drunk. Gatekeepers, also known as hedge browns, are brown butterflies with bright orange patches on their wings. 30 years ago they were known from only one locality in the county, about which I was sworn to secrecy, but they have undergone a population explosion in the last decade or so and are now very widespread. The next butterfly to look out for in your gardens, which appears to be spreading through the county at the moment, is the speckled wood, individuals of which were seen in gardens only half a mile from the centre of Leicester a couple of years ago.

To conclude, may I thank you all once again for filling in the questionnaires and particularly those of you who were able to add extra observations. The questionnaires will be preserved amongst the other records of the wildlife of Thurnby parish in the Ecological Site Databank for the county which is run by the Ecology Unit of the Leicestershire Museums Service at 96, New Walk, Leicester. The records for Thurnby, or for that matter any other part of the county, may be consulted at any time during normal working hours, or outside them by special arrangement (phone Leicester 554100 ext. 3005). We are always pleased to hear of anything out of the ordinary so far as wildlife is concerned and if you have any wildlife queries, including the identification of 'creepy-crawlies' that have invaded your house or garden, our staff or our colleagues in the Biology Section of the Museums Service are always pleased to be of help.

Ian M. Evans.

Sketch of Rose & Crown. N. Sivell

Top: Drawing of St Luke's School
C. Hoskinson and C. Jackson
Below: Village Fete



THE THURNBY & BUSHBY VILLAGE APPRAISAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The Appraisal Questionnaire was distributed to approximately 1100 households and just over 50% completed and returned them.

Population and Housing.

40% of the respondents have lived in Thurnby and Bushby for 15 years or more, this was followed closely by 35% having lived here for 4 years or less, showing a healthy mix of young and old. 15% of households had lived here from 5 to 9 years and 10% from 10 to 14 years.

The majority of households (i.e. 94%) were owner-occupied, the remainder being rented accommodation.

Of the reasons for moving to Thurnby & Bushby, 61% were attracted by the area, 38% by the house, 15% for the closeness to work and 13% for closeness to relatives.

On the question of housing needs, a resounding 75% did not want any more housing in the Parish. If extra housing was inevitable, then the majority of households thought that old peoples' accommodation was the priority, and 28% were of the opinion that development should be no more than limited infilling.

Households.

The analysis of replies revealed that people on their own comprised 16% of the households; couples comprised 41%, families of 3 comprised 14%, families of 4 comprised 17% and those families with 5 or more members numbered 7%.

Those households with people of retirement age, whether singles or couples, numbered 29%. Only 1% of households had a retired person living with them.

Employment.

The majority (59%) could not see any possibility of increasing the number of jobs within the parish. Only 7% replied in the affirmative and approximately half of these thought jobs could be created through better shopping facilities.

Transport and Traffic.

Households with one car only numbered 44%, those with two cars 33% and those with three cars or more 5.5%. Only 2% possessed motorcycles, and almost 5% had a van or lorry for business purposes. Caravans were owned by 5.5%.

Car parking facilities were considered adequate by 55%, inadequate by 25% and 16% didn't know, but there was a large body of opinion that more parking was required for the Public House, Village Hall, Church and School.

Recreation.

As can be imagined, there was a wide range of activities in which people participated.

Clubs and Societies figured strongly with 13% attending within the Parish and 34% outside. The next most popular activities were field sports with 19% and racquet sports with 17%, both outside the parish. The Scout and Guide movement involved 8.5% of the households within the Parish.

With regard to catering for special groups, 40% thought that sufficient activities were available, but 28% thought that teenagers and the elderly were not sufficiently catered for.

Shopping.

The suburban area was favoured by most households for day to day and also weekly shopping with the majority travelling by car. Leicester centre was strongly

favoured for longer term needs, but was also popular for weekly needs (again the car was the most popular form of transport, but buses were also well used).

Only a small number would travel to Nottingham, Peterborough or Birmingham for longer term needs.

Regarding an improvement in the Parish shopping/service provision, 46% said they would like to see this, but 40% said they would not, and 9% were not sure.

Educational, Medical and other facilities.

The age considered best to start school was age 4. For transfer from primary schools to a high school 46% were of the opinion that age eleven was the best age whilst 22% favoured age ten.

Opinions for the best age range at Gartree High School were split equally between 10/14, 10/16 and 10/18.

Most felt that the present educational facilities were adequate, although 5% of households had children at private schools.

The majority of respondents (53%) felt that health facilities were adequate. Those regarding facilities as inadequate expressed concern that there were insufficient doctors really local to Thurnby & Bushby and a dispensary visit was not within walking distance.

Public utilities were thought to be adequate by 65% but major concerns were expressed by the remainder about the lack of bus shelters, insufficient cutting of grass verges, no refuse collection in the week following a bank holiday and poor road sweeping and gritting.

The mobile library facility was regarded as being adequate by 31%, but over 54% didn't know as they either hadn't any opportunity to use it or in fact did not know of its existence.

Environment.

Visual features felt to be particularly important to the character of the parish were the Church, Rose & Crown, School and Village Hall, with a strong liking for trees, hedgerows and village green areas and being surrounded by green wedge.

Regarding improvements for the village areas, the Telford Way/Station Road embankments require tidying, and disused buildings opposite the school require restoration.

Parish notice-boards were regarded as being sufficient and were looked at by 55% but the remainder thought more could be provided, particularly near shops and bus stops.

Opinion was equally divided concerning problems with village pavements or footpaths. The Station Lane/Road, Dalby Avenue and Mobil garage to village footpaths were regarded as needing repair and more frequent cleaning. Dog fouling was a major concern on all footpaths.

Communication.

70% were of the opinion that the Parish Council served a useful role; less than 3% thought it didn't and the remainder didn't know. Over 50% thought it represented the views of the parish; 35% didn't know if it did or not.

Only 15% have ever asked the Council for help over a local problem but of these most had a positive response. A number, 17%, would like to see more consultation between the Parish Council and the community.

77% would like to see the Parish Council issue a newsletter.

A large proportion (94%) read TABS newsletter. The majority of comments were very favourable, but some thought that greater space could be devoted to young people, and a more frequent issue would also be appreciated.

General.

The most popular reasons for living in Thurnby & Bushby were its nearness to the city whilst still being in the countryside. The peaceful and friendly atmosphere of what is still virtually a village community has so much to commend itself to its inhabitants.

Features worth preserving were really all those things presently liked within the village :- the Church, Public House and other old buildings, the green wedge, trees and open spaces.

The things most disliked were mainly concerned with traffic problems. The A47 in particular has very heavy traffic and creates jams at Grange Lane and Station Road junctions.

The majority thought that policing of traffic could be improved, but the speed limit was about right.

Improvements suggested were a Pelican crossing at Station Road/A47, traffic lights at the Main Street, Bushby and Grange Lane, Thurnby junctions with the A47, or a rather dramatic answer would be a bypass.

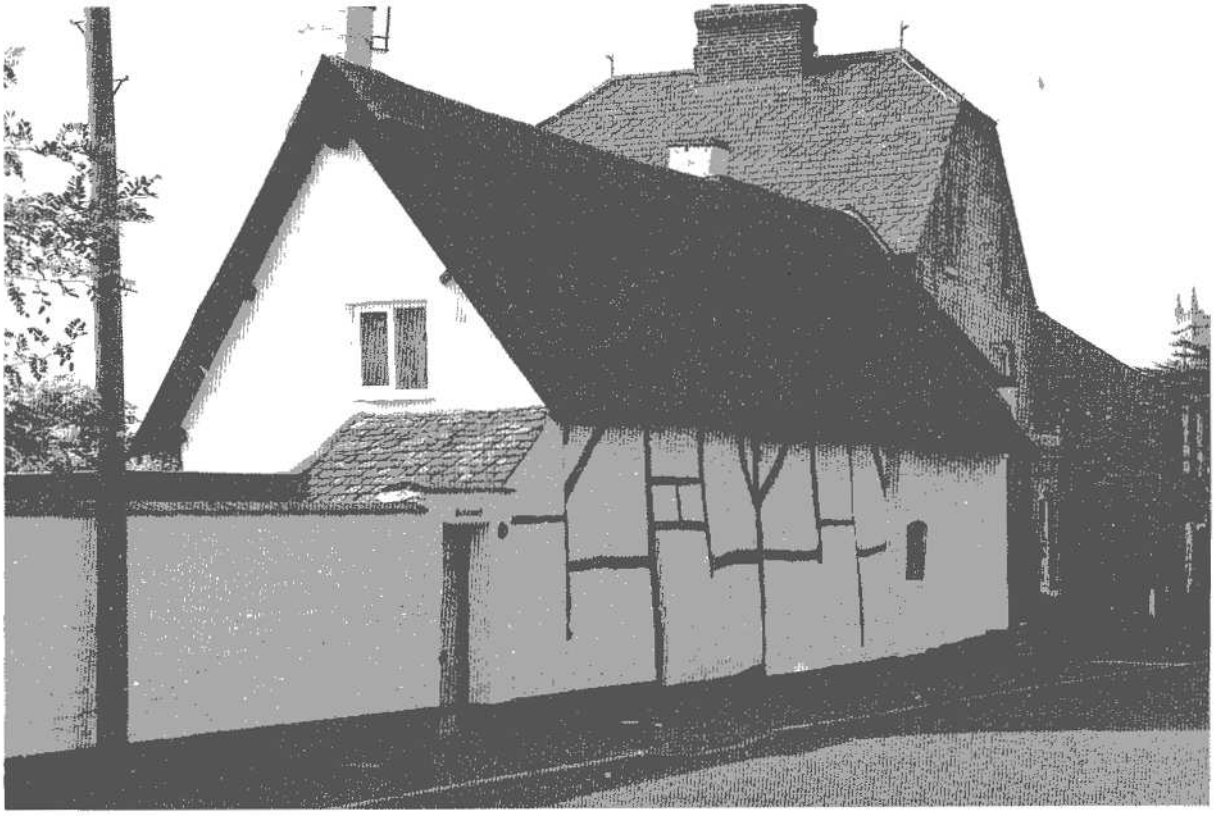
The bus service was also regarded as being inadequate for those people who require an efficient service to shopping or work.

The present shopping facilities came in for some criticism, particularly in view of the fact that more housing is being built, another concern, without any increase in shops.

B. Driver Nov. 1989

Top: The Garage
Below: Christmas at St Luke's School

Top: The Gilstead
Below: Bushby House Cottages



VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

THURNBY & BUSHBY PLAYGROUP

Thurnby and Bushby Playgroup originally started in a private house, with approximately 8 children attending. It transferred to its present home in September, 1980, with about 15 children each morning and the numbers soon rose to about 22 per morning.

The playgroup is run on the campus of St Luke's School in a mobile classroom rented from the County Education Department. It is independent of the school but frequent liaison with the teaching staff means that the transition from playgroup to school is generally a natural progression for the children.

The playgroup is run by a Committee of parents which is elected at our Annual General Meeting in September. The Committee employs two full time helpers, and we also have a rota of parents to help at playgroup, so that we can always maintain the necessary high ratio of adults to children.

The sessional fee of £1.20 per child covers essential running costs only, leaving no spare cash for new or replacement equipment. We have various fund-raising activities during the year, and as a playgroup we are dependent on the help of all parents, both at the fund-raising events, and on the rota. Without this help the playgroup would cease to exist.

The playgroup is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9.00 a.m. to 11.45 a.m.

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THURNBY AND DISTRICT ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The Branch was formed on 17th April, 1944 at a meeting held in the Memorial Hall, Thurnby when a Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Major H.E. Inglesant and at its first General Meeting on 14th July 1944 Capt. John Roberts-George of the Manor House, Thurnby was appointed President, a position which he held until his death in 1984. Vice Presidents were Sir Harold Nutting and Lieut. Commander George Bennion.

The Branch covered the areas of Thurnby, Bushby, Stoughton, Houghton and Scraptoft.

The aims of the Branch were to educate the public to the fact that the maintenance of the disabled and the welfare of ex-Service men and women was a national one and that the Branch must look after and attend to the rightful claims of ex-service men and women for suitable employment in civil life, help and assist those men and women who fought in the last war and those who served in the armed forces since that time. Such assistance has been given through the years in connection with pension claims, appeals to the Ministry of Pensions, reinstatement problems, finding employment for able and disabled ex-service men, housing and tenancy problems, employment contracts and domestic difficulties. Several cases were for men from the 1914-18 war. The work of the Branch was assisted by a number of donations of money and the donation of a piece of land, by a local builder, Mr. L. Sherriffs on which it was proposed to build a Branch H.Q. However, before enough money could be raised to complete the task the land was purchased by the Leicestershire Education Authority and now forms part of St. Lukes School Playing Field. The money was held in Trust and eventually handed to the Thurnby Memorial Hall Management Committee and formed a major contribution to the building of a Committee Room which has been named "The Royal British Legion Room".

A Womens Section was formed in 1946 under the Chairmanship of Mrs. W.

H. Smith of Bushby and much useful assistance has been given to the Branch by its members. The Section was disbanded in 1984 through lack of support.

Sir Harold Nutting presented the Branch with its Standard in memory of his two sons who died in the war. Lady Nutting presented a Standard to the Womens Section. Both Standards hang in St. Lukes Church Thurnby.

The work of the Branch continues under the present president and chairman, Mr. Tom Williams.

Meetings are held every 4th Monday in the month except on Bank Holidays, in the Royal British Legion Room, Memorial Hall, Thurnby at 8 p.m.

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BINGO

The local bingo club has been in existence for about 10 years and, apart from a short break in 1988 and holiday times, "eyes down" has been the order of the day every Thursday at 8 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, Thurnby.

Originally run under the umbrella of the Scouting Organisation, it is now run independently and all proceeds are sent to charity. Last year, with members' help we sent just over £200 to Cancer Research and this years' charity is C.O.P.E. Annual membership costs 35p.

Monetary prizes are given for lines and full houses and every week there is a chance to win the Accumulator and Snowball. A raffle, members' draw and refreshments, plus the opportunity to meet new friends are among the other attractions of a night out at the Bingo Club.

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STOUGHTON AND THURNBY CRICKET CLUB.

Prior to the Second World War the villages of Thurnby and Stoughton both had separate cricket teams which were totally unconnected. During the war circumstances dictated that play was suspended for a while and thus it wasn't until afterwards, in approximately 1947 I believe, that play was able to resume.

Unfortunately the ravages of war had resulted in Thurnby Cricket Club having some kit but no ground and Stoughton a ground but no kit! A momentous decision was therefore taken resulting in the formation of Thurnby and Stoughton Cricket Club.

Why the change of name? Thereby lies an unfortunate story. Apparently the decision was taken to purchase a set of Club caps for the players to wear, incorporating the Clubs initials - i e T & S CC. Regrettably, due to a manufacturing "bails up" the initials were reversed and thus the extraordinary decision to change the Clubs name was taken - hence Stoughton and Thurnby Cricket Club.

For the next 30 odd years the club operated from its present ground off the Thurnby to Stoughton Road. During this period matches were of a "friendly" only nature, although I'm sure some of the villages' older stalwarts would argue otherwise.

Approximately 8 years ago the members decided to join the North Leicestershire Cricket League since when the Club has progressed steadily upwards, culminating in its promotion to the First Division of the NLCL at the end of last season. This achievement however coincided with the club having the opportunity to enter the Leicester Senior Cricket League and at the 1988 AGM the decision was taken to take up the challenges of a higher grade of local cricket. Without a doubt everyone connected with the

Club is looking forward to the tasks ahead.

Like many similar organisations we rely totally on the support and considerable efforts of our members, their families and friends. If you would like to join or help us in any way why not give me a ring. Alternatively come and watch us play during the season, especially our youth team, as your support is always appreciated.

Robert Johnson

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SCOUTING AND GUIDING

In 1989, Scouting & Guiding continues to flourish and grow in Thurnby, with a membership of over 150 children and young people, ranging from 6 years to 21 years, in Beavers, Brownies (2 packs) Cubs, Guides, Scouts, Ventures plus a team of enthusiastic Leaders.

There is now need for a Rainbow Section (pre-Brownies), a 2nd Beaver Colony, a 2nd Cub Pack, a 2nd Guide Company and a 2nd Scout Troop.

The aims of the movements have always been "To develop the mental, physical and spiritual needs of the young people." It is even more relevant in this day and age, and it is still obviously what the young people want. What foresight Lord and Lady Baden-Powell must have had!

If it is to continue, we need more leaders, more volunteers to raise funds, to serve on Committees, more lay-helpers - the 1st & 75th Group would welcome YOU! And it would ensure that Scouting and Guiding in Thurnby could carry on for another 50 years.

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RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Nearly 60 years ago the Leicestershire Rural Community Council was formed to support, encourage and promote community development work, voluntary activity and self-help in rural Leicestershire.
L.R.C.C. are concerned with change - change for the better but not for change's sake. They believe that a balance must be maintained so that viable communities can continue to exist and flourish and improve the quality of rural life.
To this end L.R.C.C. act as a CHAMPION for rural issues when policies and rural economics are planned; as a MONITOR to maintain and improve essential services; as a CATALYST for creative effort within rural communities and as your SPOKESMAN to appropriate bodies on housing, employment, transport etc.
You can help too, by informing L.R.C.C. of any needs or changes affecting your village, and by using and encouraging others to use those amenities and facilities which do exist.

Remember: We're right behind you
...and ahead of you too.

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THE MOTHERS' UNION

The Thurnby with Stoughton Branch of the Mothers' Union has recently celebrated its 85th Birthday.

The purpose of the Mothers' Union to support Marriage and Christian family life, has never faltered since it was founded by Mary Sumner in 1876. It is the largest and most widely spread womens' organisation with more members in dioceses overseas than here in the home dioceses, now approaching half a million.

Central to all Mothers' Union activities is prayer. A 'Wave of Prayer' has continued uninterrupted around the world since 1918;

'Midday Prayers' are observed by members, meetings and Offices, and this Diocese (amongst others) has an 'Emergency Prayer Chain'. The Mothers' Union is committed to maintain a world-wide fellowship of Christians, united in prayer, worship and service. It does this not only by prayer but also by correspondence, by trained worker contact overseas, and by visits, where experiences are exchanged and much mutual learning takes place.

Each Branch is committed to support the Church in which it is based and to encourage parents to bring their children up in the life and faith of that Church. Mothers' Union members are linked in their willingness to help families and individuals where and when this is needed. When a catastrophe occurs to a member away from home it is not unusual for a local Branch to be told, and a member of that Branch to offer help and support. Free holidays are arranged for individuals or families in special need. Members can together provide more help and service than they could singly.

Our local Branch meets on the second Thursday of the month at 2.30 p.m. for prayer and worship, and some enlightening talk, discussion or activity.

Anyone who has been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity, and who supports the aims and objectives of the Mothers' Union may become a member. An Admission Service is held each year for new members.

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THE 4-2-16 GROUP

The 4-2-16 Group was formed when the Mums & Toddlers Group (originated and sponsored by the Mothers' Union) lost its first generation to Infant School. The Mums who had brought their toddlers missed their contact with each other, and the opportunity to swop news and experiences.

The Mums and Toddlers still meets in Church on the first Thursday of the month at 3.00 pm - with ever new batches of recruits - and the 4-2-16 Group of Mums meets at 9.00 am on the third Thursday of the month in the Upper Room of the Hall.

The purpose is to take a look at everyday problems and joys in the bringing up of children in a Christian light. We have covered everything from materialism to the occult, and for six years now we have never been at a loss for a subject to chew over in lively discussion.

The group is primarily for Mums with children still at school (in the 4 to 16 age group) as they face the same sort of problems in society as it exists today. Only occasionally do we invite an 'expert' to start the discussion, but we are an ecumenical group all the time.

*****

GIRLS FRIENDLY SOCIETY

This is a very old society, having been started in 1875 by Mrs Mary Townsend - friend of Mary Sumner who started Mothers' Union. There were so many girls who were forced to leave home to go into service and who were very lonely. It was a Christian society and small groups were formed, mainly in London at first, where girls were able to meet together to pray, hear Bible stories etc. The GFS then spread all over the country - many groups were in the north - amidst poverty and terrible conditions in mills - It became a lifeline to many girls and women. We still provide hostels for girls living away from home, and Chaplains in factories.

Now the society is worldwide. Our branch here in Thurnby started, we think (records were lost in the war) in 1902-03 and Mrs. Sally Fielding who used to live in the

Square was a founder member. Now that there are so many things for girls to do our branch is smaller, but still very active with perhaps wider interests. However, it is still a Christian society and part of St. Lukes Church. Girls may start at rising six and at seven make their promise in Church. We welcome girls whatever their religion.

Jean Critchley. President and Leader at St. Lukes.

*****

MONDAY CLUB

This is now a thriving group of ladies who meet every third Monday in the month in the back-room of the Memorial Hall at 8.15 p.m.

The group traces its roots back to 1977 with the first Chairlady being Mrs Joan Jones - the first meeting was a talk on "Dialects".

Although the group primarily meets for a variety of talks, we intersperse meetings with theatre visits, guided walks and other outings and hold a car rally in June every year.

Monday Club is open to ladies of any age who wish to meet informally and enjoy (hopefully') a variety of talks. Visitors are always welcome.

Julie Jolly. Chairman.

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THURNBY AND BUSHBY SOCIETY

The Society was formed in 1968 by residents who wanted to conserve and improve their surroundings and amenities, which is still the aim of the society today. Its present membership is around 600 and it is completely independent, non-political and self-supporting with an elected committee. The Society works closely with Parish, District and County Councils as well as other environmental and preservation societies.

The Society helps to promote a strong community spirit by a) organising social events, e.g. an annual Valentine Dance, car treasure hunts, darts/skittles evenings and walks. b) publishing a newsletter three times a year which is delivered free to every household in the village.

Surplus funds from subscriptions and social events are used to buy things for the village, e.g. spring bulbs, seats, litter bins etc. and finance certain village activities/projects.

Chairman: Mr. A Sherriff. 50 Hollies Way, Bushby, Leicester. Leicester 416868

Secretary: Mrs. J. Lord. 30 Dalby Avenue, Bushby,Leicester. Leicester 412377.

Subscription: 30p per year
15p Senior Citizens per year.

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THURNBY EMBROIDERY GROUP

This Group meets in the Royal British Legion Room of the Memorial Hall on Wednesdays from 2pm to 4pm for 12 weeks from September to December and 12 weeks from January to March.

We are a group skilled in all forms of needlework, crochet, knitting etc and work on a self-help basis.

The fee is minimal as the Group is helped financially by Thurnby, Bushby and Stoughton W.I. as part of their 'Women in the Community Project'. New members are welcome.

Contact: Mrs. Frances Sheffield Leicester 414014.

*****

THURNBY AND DISTRICT BAND.

Thurnby and District band was formed about eight years ago, from the break-up of a Scout marching band. During the last few years there have been several changes to its name, and also to its style of playing. The Band is now a Concert Band, playing all types of music, and composed of about 45 members of all ages from seven to seventy years.

Players of all types of brass, wind and percussion instruments have always been welcome to join the Band, with experience not being essential. A group for Juniors is being formed at the present time, tuition being given by the Musical Director, Bandmaster and senior members of the Band.

Practices are held at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings, and enquiries can be made to Mr. T. Taylor, the Bandmaster, on Leicester 412428.

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THURNBY FLOWER CLUB

Thurnby Flower Club was formed approximately nine years ago, when it was decided by a group of enthusiastic new flower arrangers that what this area needed was a new Flower Club, as a natural progression from their nightschool Flower Arranging classes. We now have a membership of approximately 38 ladies. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Thurnby Memorial Hall. We have demonstrators, practice evenings and coach outings. Our aim is friendship through flowers and new members are always welcome. Anybody interested in joining a friendly Flower Club, please contact Janet Fletcher, Leicester 415775.

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NATIONAL WOMENS REGISTER

The National Womens Register was formed in 1960 following a letter from a lonely housewife to a national newspaper asking why a register of women could not be set up for those with 'liberal interests and a desire to remain individuals'. This register would enable them to contact each other upon moving to a new area. The response was overwhelming and groups sprang up all over the country, offering women an opportunity to take part in informal discussions, to develop friendships and share experiences.

The Thurnby and Scraptoft NWR was formed in 1981 by Carol Martin. It then had approximately 15 members. They met in one anothers homes for discussions and did research into subjects which interested them. They also enjoyed social outings such as walks and skittles evenings. NWR is still run on the same basis. Approximately 12 members attend the meetings which are held once a month, in the evening. They choose the programme for the coming year which includes discussions, speakers and social occasions. The atmosphere is friendly and informal and new members would be very welcome. The Local Organiser during 1988-9 is Jane Chiddick. Leicester 418083.

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THE THURNBY MOTHER AND TODDLER GROUP

The Thurnby Mother and Toddler Group was formed approximately 13 years ago by a small group of mothers who belonged to the Thurnby United Reform Church. It enabled mothers of small children to meet and share their problems and experiences over a cup of coffee and allowed the children to socialise with their peer group. This was particularly important for those children who might otherwise have been isolated and ill-prepared

Thurnby & Bushby 1989

Shops

1. Post Office and general store - Village Square
2. Hairdresser and sun parlour - Telford Way
3. Newsagent - Telford Way
4. Small supermarket - Telford Way
5. Hairdresser - Cranbrook Road
6. Newsagent and Video store - Cranbrook Road
7. Small supermarket - Cranbrook Road

Garage

1. Harris's garage - A47 with shop

Public houses

1. The Swallow - Station Road
2. The Rose and Crown - Main Street

Library

None in village but mobile library calls on Fridays.

Doctor's surgery

1. At Hill Court

Accommodation for elderly

1. Hill Court, Main Street
2. The Lodge, Grange Lane
3. Flats at both ends of Randles Close
4. De Montfort flats, Fern Close

Phone boxes

1. Station Road/entrance to service road (near A47)
2. Main Street near Hollies Way

Notice Boards

1. Somerby Road near Station Lane
2. A47 Opposite Station Road
3. A47 Opposite Dalby Avenue
4. Main Street, Village Hall
5. Main Street, opposite Padwell Lane

Pillar Boxes

1. Station Road/Forest Rise
2. Main Street/Randles Close
3. A47 near United Reform Church
4. Post Office, the Square

Car Parks

1. Centre of village at top of Court Hill
2. By village hall
3. By St. Luke's school

Traffic limits

1. A47 40 miles per hour
2. Side roads 30 miles per hour
3. Weight restriction - 3 tons - through village south of A47

Traffic Lights

1. A47/Station Lane - no pedestrian crossing on A47

Buses

1. 57 - via A47 and village south of A47 every 30 minutes
2. 56 - from Netherhall via Station Road and A47 every 30 minutes

Bus Shelters

1. A47 opposite Dalby Avenue
2. A47 opposite Station Lane

BOOK LIST

The following list of suggested reading is not limited only to Thurnby and has been prepared by Aubrey Stevenson, Leicestershire Studies Librarian at the Bishop Street Information Centre in Leicester.

*BOURNE, Jill — Place-names of Leicestershire and Rutland 2nd ed. 1981

BURTON, William — The description of Leicestershire ..... 2nd ed. 1777 (list pub. 1622)

*FARNHAM, George F. — Leicestershire medieval village notes Vol 1. 1929 (Section on Thurnby and Bushby)

*HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL — Scraptoft, Thurnby & Stoughton local plan: written statement. 1984

*HARBOROUGH DISTRICT — official guide. various editions (since 1977)

*HOSKINS, W.G. — Leicestershire: a Shell guide. 1970

*NICHOLS, John — The history and antiquities of the County of Leicester Vol. 2 part 2. 1798 (1971 reprint)

*PALMER, Roy — The folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland, 1985

*PEVSNER, Nikolaus — Leicestershire and Rutland (Buildings of England series) 2nd ed. 1984

*VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF LEICESTER. Vol. 5 Gartree Hundred; ed. J. M. Lee and R. A. McKinley. 1964

Directories by various publishers (e.g. Kelly; White; Wright) from 1846

THURNBY AND BUSHBY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 1 (September 1977) -

The Church

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LEICESTERSHIRE CHURCHES

Part 1: the periodical sources; ed. D. Parsons. 1978.

Part 2: newspaper sources; comp. G. K. Brandwood. 1980.

HUNT, John — The ancient church of Thurnby. 1871

Natural history

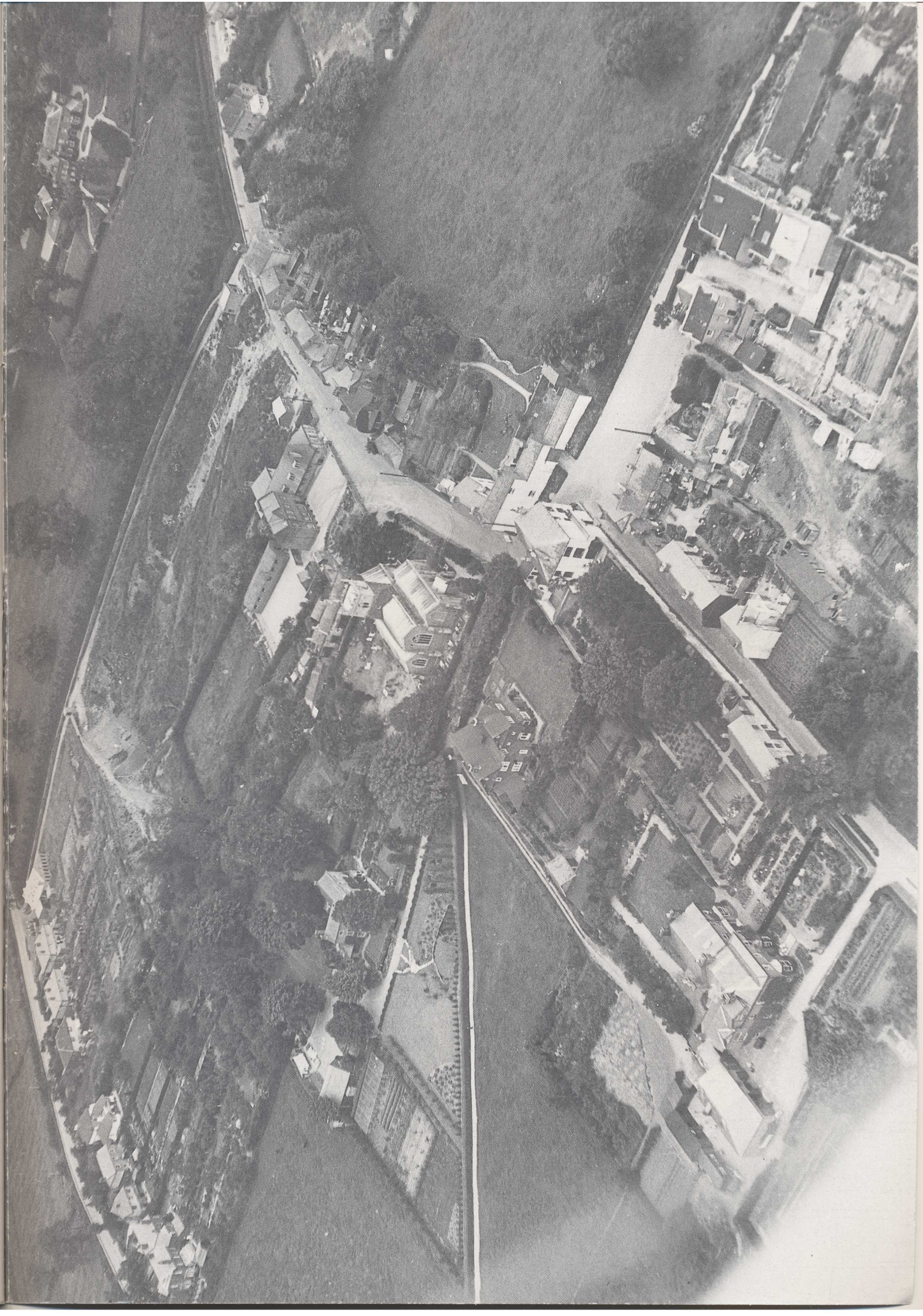
BROWNE, Montague — The vertebrate animals of Leicestershire and Rutland 1889.

*OTTER, Jack — The birds of East Leicestershire. 1965.

*PRIMAVESI, A.L. and EVANS, P.A., eds. Flora of Leicestershire. 1988

*STRANGWAYS, C Fox — The geology of the country near Leicester. 1903.

All items listed are available for use in the Leicestershire Collection, Information Centre, Bishop Street, Leicester, LE1 6AA (0533 556699) and most should be available through your local library. Photocopies of relevant local extracts can be supplied.



Thurnby & Bushby: An Appraisal Pbk. ISBN 0 9515414 0 4